

Afghan peace talks postponed

BONN (R) — A German political research foundation trying to arrange unofficial Afghan peace talks in Bonn this month postponed the meeting on Monday, a spokesman said. Representatives of the Afghan rebels, the Kabul government and exiled former King Zahir Shah had all agreed to attend the meeting but then set more conditions, Ruediger Sielaff of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation told Reuters. "There are still talks going on about a meeting later on," said Mr. Sielaff, head of the Asia section of the foundation, which is close to the opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD). "There have been several developments that made it seem opportune to put the talks off." Mr. Sielaff declined to give details but said the three sides expressed objection to the list of participants his foundation had drawn up and it would need more time to negotiate a new one. Although unofficial, the meeting would have been the first among the three groups since Afghanistan's communist coup in 1978 and the civil war that followed. The United Nations announced last week it would send an observer to the talks originally for Jan. 27-29. U.N. sources had previously expressed reservations about the meeting, feeling it could damage months of patient U.N. diplomacy for its own talks in March.

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Iran frees 7 Tunisian PoWs

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran freed seven Tunisians captured while fighting alongside the Iraqi army in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, Tehran Radio reported Monday. The broadcast said the released prisoners of war (PoWs) were handed over to the Tunisian embassy in Tehran "within the framework of Iran's humanitarian actions." The Tunisians were among hundreds of Arabs who fought alongside the Iraqis during the war. Iran and Iraq have traded some 38,000 PoWs, but Iran accuses Iraq of still holding 5,000 Iraqis. The Iraqis deny that.

Britain's Ireland minister offers to quit

LONDON (R) — Britain's highly-respected minister for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke, offered to resign Monday after making a frivolous appearance on Irish Television within hours of a guerrilla bomb attack which killed seven people. He sang a song on a Dublin Chat Show, enraging politicians in Northern Ireland. Prime Minister John Major, who was touring the province, declined to say immediately if he was accepting Mr. Brooke's resignation offer. Earlier he had expressed full trust in Mr. Brooke, 58, who has been praised by all political and religious parties for attempts to bring conflict in Northern Ireland to the negotiating table in the last three years. Mr. Brooke, speaking in parliament, said it was "patently an error" to have allowed himself to be persuaded to sing a folk song on the Dublin Television Chat Show.

Saddam urges envoys to boost ties

BAGHDAD (R) — President Saddam Hussein urged his ambassadors on Monday to improve Iraq's ties with other countries. The Iraqi News Agency (INA) said President Saddam, his country isolated since the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, made the statement in a meeting with several diplomats. "He acquainted himself with their activities and gave directives aimed at bolstering the relations between our country and the world," it said. Iraq withdrew many of its ambassadors before and after last year's Gulf war, leaving skeleton representation.

Envoy denies Iran financed kidnappers

WASHINGTON (R) — Iran's ambassador to the United Nations on Monday denied a published report that his government paid Lebanese kidnappers for the upkeep of their U.S. hostages and accused Israel of being behind the story. The envoy, Kamal Kharrazi, acknowledged in an interview on NBC Television's "Today" show that Tehran had "special influence" on Lebanon's Shiite community. "But this does not mean that they have been paid or the decisions have been made in Tehran," he said. The Washington Post reported on Sunday that U.S. intelligence had traced regular payments to the groups holding the Western hostages to official Iranian sources. It said Iran also paid the captors \$1 to \$2 million for each hostage release to keep their captors happy. Mr. Kharrazi said the notion that any such payments could be traced was not credible.

Iran's 'hanging judge' hospitalised

NICOSIA (AP) — Sadeq Khalakhal, an Iranian parliamentarian known as "the hanging judge" for ordering the execution of hundreds of people in the early days of the 1979 revolution, was in the hospital Monday for unknown reasons. He became notorious in the United States when he was seen on television kicking the bodies of U.S. servicemen who died in a failed bid to rescue American hostages in April 1980. The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said Mr. Khalakhal was under treatment, but that "no report is as yet available on the cause" of his illness.

King, Sultan Qaboos hold talks in Oman

MUSCAT (Agencies) — His Majesty King Hussein and Sultan Qaboos Ben Said of Oman held talks here Monday. It was the King's first visit to the Gulf region since the Gulf war. The King was greeted at Muscat airport by Sultan Qaboos. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, and the Oman News Agency described the two-day visit as a private one. The two leaders later held talks which focused on "bilateral relations... and reviewing developments in the Arab and international arenas," Petra said. The King's talks in Oman, the southernmost state in the six-member Gulf Cooperation

Council (GCC) leader also seen as part of efforts to improve relations between the Gulf states and Jordan. The GCC groups Oman with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar. The talks were attended on the Jordanian side by Royal Court Chief Adnan Abu Odeh and the King's Military Secretary His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad. King Hussein arrived here after ending a three-day private visit to Brunei where he held talks with Sultan Hassan Bolkiah on ways of enhancing cooperation between Jordan and Brunei.



On the occasion of the King's visit to Brunei a religious ceremony was held at the Royal Palace Monday.



Sultan Qaboos Ibn Said. King Hussein was seen off by Sultan Hassan Bolkiah and senior officials in the sultanate.

Algeria announces arrests of militants; bomb attacks reported

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Police announced the arrests Monday of Islamic militants suspected of deadly attacks on security forces, and Algerian radio reported fresh bomb attacks against police. The radio, citing eyewitnesses, reported that bombs were hurled Sunday night at a police station in the capital's Al Anasser District. It gave no details of damage, injuries, or suspects.

In a separate incident, police reported that several Islamic radicals — some armed with swords, daggers and axes — have been arrested and charged with assaults on army and police posts. The reports came as tension worsened between military-backed authorities and the fundamentalists from whom they snatched victory in the country's first free parliamentary elections.

The independence newspaper Le Matin reported that the government plans to dissolve local councils across the country, more than half of which are controlled by the fundamentalists. Le Matin, citing well-informed sources, reported that the 1,540 councils would be replaced by provisional administrations. Interior Ministry sources denied the reports.

The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) has claimed that more than 500 of its supporters have been arrested since the army forced President Chadli Benjedid to resign Jan. 11.

In a gesture of defiance, most of the 188 fundamentalist deputies elected in the first round of parliamentary elections Dec. 26 met Sunday at Algiers city hall.

Acting FIS leader Abdul Kader Hachani said that the party wants to set up a shadow government, including an assembly and president, composed of deputies elected in the first round, radio monitors cited Algerian radio as saying Sunday.

Hocine Ait Ahmad, leader of the Liberal Front for Socialist Forces (FFS) that finished second in the first round with 25 seats, declared that he would not support violence against the FIS. "We will not permit such methods and we will reject violence, because they will only drag the country toward chaos," Mr. Ait Ahmad said in an interview with the newspaper Al Hayat.

Foreign Minister Lakhdar Brahimi demanded that Iran's fundamentalist rulers publicly retract criticism of the crackdown, but ruled out breaking relations with Tehran. Iran and Algeria called home their ambassadors Monday in a mushrooming dispute over Tehran's support for the Muslim fundamentalists who want an Islamic republic in Algeria.

Minutes after Algerian radio reported that Abdul Kader Hachani, the Algerian ambassador in Tehran, was being called home, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said

it too was recalling its ambassador in Algeria.

Tehran Radio quoted an unidentified Foreign Ministry official as saying Ambassador Javid Qorbanoghlu was being called home "to carry out duties, and for consultations about the latest developments in Algeria."

The radio quoted the "informed source" as saying he regretted "the current situation, and restrictions on the Iranian embassy, which meant that our ambassador was unable to carry out his duties."

Iranian officials have attacked Algeria's ruling High State Council, which took power earlier this month to prevent the fundamentalists from gaining control of parliament.

In recent statements, Iranian officials have openly backed the FIS. But Tehran maintains that it had extended no material backing to the fundamentalists. In his weekly press briefing Monday, Iran's Vice-President Hassan Habibi dismissed Algerian allegations that Tehran was actively involved with the Islamic groups in Algeria.

Tehran Radio quoted Mr. Habibi as saying the accusations were "lies." He said Iran would "tolerate them with broad-mindedness, and give a proper response in good time."

The arrests announced Mon-

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'Algeria 3 years from nuclear weapons'

PARIS (AP) — Algeria could master the technology to build nuclear weapons within three to five years, the French daily newspaper Liberation reported Monday.

Cited unnamed defence ministry sources, Liberation said that France had stepped up intelligence gathering in its former colony following U.S. and British media reports that Algeria hopes to develop nuclear weapons.

Algeria will be able to control the technology to produce nuclear weapons "three to five years from now," the leftist newspaper quoted the source as saying.

Algeria was first reported to be developing nuclear-weapons technology last April in news stories appearing in the Washington Times and the Sunday Times of London.

Both newspapers cited unnamed officials as saying that a nuclear reactor Algeria is building with Chinese assistance at "Aid Oussera is incompatible with simple scientific research."

Algeria's Technology Ministry issued a communique late Sunday stating that the reactor had recently been inspected by two officials of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The communique did not say when the inspection had been carried out, but said that a proposal to bring the reactor under agency control would be submitted to its board of directors in February.

Egypt invited to Arab talks on multilaterals

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa said on Monday he had received an invitation from Morocco to attend an Arab foreign ministers' meeting ahead of planned multilateral Middle East talks in Moscow.

Mr. Musa, speaking to reporters, did not say whether Egypt would accept the invitation.

He said the meeting on Friday had been called to coordinate Arab policies for the multinational talks, which are due to take place in Moscow on Jan. 28-29 and cover such topics as regional arms control, water and security.

Sources at the Arab League said its secretary-general, Esmat Abdul Maguid, would attend the Morocco meeting.

Syria and Lebanon have said they would boycott the Moscow talks because the Middle East peace process which began last October has so far failed to produce a commitment by Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab territory.

The multinational talks, sponsored by the United States and Russia, are designed to run parallel to bilateral talks Israel is holding with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestinians.

The Palestinian news agency Wafa quoted Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat as saying that the meeting in Marrakech, Morocco, will take place Friday as part of a two-day summit hosted by King Hassan II.

PLO has not indicated whether the Palestinian delegation would go to Moscow. Palestinian sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the decision

may be made during the Morocco meeting.

The PLO is not taking part in the peace talks, but has influence over the Palestinian team.

Invitations to the Moscow meeting have reportedly been sent to more than 25 participants, including the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and the 12-nation European Community.

In Damascus, Syria, PLO envoy Marwan Abdul Hamid met Sunday with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sbarra to discuss the peace process.

Israel's continued construction of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories has become a major obstacle in the peace talks.

The Palestinians are attending the peace talks in a joint delegation with the Jordanians. None of the Palestinian delegates are PLO members, although most make no secret of their support for the movement.

Israel refuses to deal directly with the PLO.

But the PLO now appears to be stepping up pressure to be represented at the talks in one way or another.

Such demands for PLO representation in the multinational talks are almost certain to fall on deaf ears in Israel, further complicating the tortuous negotiations to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Palestinian officials said Mr. Abdul Hamid, a member of the PLO's Central Committee, delivered a letter to Mr. Sbarra from Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the PLO's Political Department.

They declined to disclose the letter's contents.

American lecturer killed in West Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — A United States lecturer at the Bir Zeit University was murdered Sunday by a masked assailant in the occupied West Bank, police said.

The victim was identified as Albert Ernst Glock, 67. He was head of the Centre for Palestinian Archaeology at the West Bank university. Military authorities have closed Bir Zeit for most of the four-year Palestinian uprising saying it was a hotbed of violence.

A masked person shot Mr. Glock after the archaeologist parked his car at the home of his research assistant near the university, 20 kilometres north of Jerusalem, said police spokeswoman Tami Paul-Cohen.

"He was shot twice at close range," she said, adding that police were investigating the motive behind the murder. No suspects had yet been arrested, she said.

Military sources said three bullet shells were found at the site and that Mr. Glock's body was taken to Abu Kabir hospital for an autopsy.

University spokesman Mark Taylor said Mr. Glock had been with Bir Zeit since 1976 and had lived in the town of Aram six kilometres north of Jerusalem. Mr. Glock was born in Gifford, Idaho, and lived much of his life in Illinois, Mr. Taylor said.

"We are all in shock about this. He had been with us for many years and was well respected," Mr. Taylor said. "I don't understand it. I have no doubt that this does not come from the Palestinians."

In a statement issued to the press, the university condemned the killing saying it "could only have been perpetrated by enemies of the Palestinian people."

"The university decries the lawlessness pervasive throughout the occupied Palestinian territories and calls on the international community to take concrete measures towards providing protection for the Palestinian community in the West Bank and Gaza Strip," the statement said.

Bir Zeit is officially closed but 2,000 students are currently taking classes off campus.

Shamir presses his defiance of U.S. a notch further

OCCUPIED WEST BANK (Agencies) — A defiant Yitzhak Shamir on Monday kicked off his reelection campaign with a vow to build more Jewish settlements in the occupied territories despite U.S. pressure to stop construction.

The prime minister told a roaring crowd of 300 at a Jewish settlement that the West Bank and Gaza Strip were promised to them by God and would remain Israel's "forever and ever."

In a news conference afterwards, Mr. Shamir toned down his rhetoric and said Israel's political crisis — which is expected to lead to early elections — would not slow Middle East peace talks in Washington.

"It is our feeling that we are making progress," Mr. Shamir said of the talks.

Mr. Shamir's double message was designed to win the support of ultra-nationalists while not alienating the majority of Israelis who want the peace talks to continue.

But the strategy also set Mr. Shamir on a collision course with the Bush administration which has asked Israel to freeze Jewish settlement construction during the peace negotiations.

Washington has linked the settlement issue to the \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees requested by Israel to help absorb Soviet Jewish immigrants. The Israeli request is expected to be debated by the U.S. Congress in early

February. A finance ministry report to be submitted to Congress predicts an unemployment rate of more than 16 per cent by 1996 if Israel does not get the loan guarantees. Unemployment is now about 11 per cent (see page 2).

But despite the high stakes, Mr. Shamir on Monday was openly defiant of the Americans. "This construction (of settlements) will continue, and no force in the world will stop this construction," he told the residents of Betar Illit, an ultra-orthodox settlement about 10 kilometres southwest of Jerusalem.

As rain pounded on the tent overhead, Mr. Shamir said: "We have rains of blessing from above and this blessing tells us... that our God in the heavens, he is with us, with you, with the people of Israel."

"We say to ourselves, and to the gentiles of the world and to the next generations, here will be our homeland, here will be our home, forever and ever," Mr. Shamir told the settlers, most of them wearing the black coats and hats of the ultra-orthodox.

About 450 families live in Betar, and a total of 8,000 housing units are planned, settlement officials said. Mr. Shamir was made an honorary settlement resident before his speech.

Israel has moved about 112,000 settlers to the West Bank and Gaza Strip since seizing the lands

in the 1967 war. In the past two years, Mr. Shamir's government sharply stepped up settlement construction. Last year, about 25 per cent of publicly funded construction reportedly went up in the occupied lands.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, the architect of the settlement drive, has demanded that Israel annex all parts of the occupied lands inhabited by settlers before it continues with the autonomy talks.

Mr. Shamir's speech at Betar Illit came a day after he lost his parliamentary majority, setting the stage for elections ahead of the scheduled Nov. 3 date.

The government crisis was set off by two far-right parties opposed to Israel's plan to offer autonomy to Palestinians, while keeping control of the land. Settler leaders fear even autonomy will lead to a Palestinian state.

The opposition Labour Party asked Likud on Monday to negotiate a date for early elections or face the threat of being toppled in a parliamentary motion of no-confidence next week.

Mr. Shamir controls 59 seats in the 120-member parliament after the departure of the Tehiya and Moledet parties.

Labour Party said Israel's main problem was unemployment, indicating its intention of concentrating its campaign on what it

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Top Libyan official meets Chinese leaders

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin met with a top Libyan official Monday, but an official report did not say whether they discussed Western allegations that Libya was responsible for two airplane bombings that killed 440 people.

Abdul Salam Jalloud, the second ranked official in Libya behind Colonel Muammar Qadhafi, also held talks Monday with Vice-Premier Wu Xueqian.

Major Jalloud, who arrived Sunday for the working visit, may be seeking Chinese support to counter allegations by the United States, Britain and France that Libya was involved in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland in 1988 and a French plane over Niger in 1989. A total of 440 people died in the two bombings.

The Libyan government has denied any involvement in the Pan Am bombing.

None of the reports by the official Xinhua news agency mentioned the issue. Xinhua said Maj. Jalloud and Mr. Wu held

"friendly and sincere" talks about bilateral relations and international affairs, and the two leaders agreed that their governments have similar or identical views on many world issues.

Xinhua said the two officials agreed that developing countries like theirs faced many difficulties and problems as a result of recent drastic changes in the world and the current chaos of the international situation. The report did not give any details.

The Xinhua report on the meeting with Mr. Yang said they discussed the formation of a new world order, but it also did not provide details of the talks.

U.S. and British authorities have charged two suspected Libyan intelligence agents in the bombing of the Pan Am flight. France has charged four high-ranking Libyans, including Col. Qadhafi's brother-in-law and a deputy foreign minister, with plotting the bombing of the UTA flight over Niger.

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Cypriot president calls problem 'relic of past'

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Cypriot President George Vassiliou said Monday the Cyprus problem was a relic of the past whose solution would be to benefit of all Cypriots and of the region.

"In the new climate, with the new developments in the ex-Soviet Union, in the Balkans, a new world is being formed and it is stupid to continue with a so-called confrontation."

"I want to look forward to an era of cooperation with Turkey where together — Greece, Turkey, Cyprus — we will all work jointly in order to promote welfare and well-being and stability and security in our part of the world."

Speaking to reporters after a meeting with the new U.N. secretary-general, Boutros Ghali, Mr. Vassiliou said: "Progress is necessary, in my opinion. I think that the Cyprus problem is a relic of the past. In today's world there is no basis for this continuing."

The United Nations has been involved for years in efforts to reunite the Mediterranean island under a federal system of government.

Cyprus has been virtually parti-

tioned since 1974 when Turkish troops occupied its northern third after a short-lived coup in Nicosia engineered by the military junta then ruling Greece.

Mr. Vassiliou, who described his meeting with Dr. Ghali as very useful and productive, said they agreed that "a solution of the Cyprus problem is long-time overdue."

Referring to the U.N. chief, who succeeded Javier Perez de Cuellar on Jan. 1, Mr. Vassiliou said: "His emphasis in the next weeks to come will be in trying to make progress in finding a solution to the Cyprus problem. And for my part, I assured the secretary-general that, as in the past, we will give him our full cooperation."

He said he would be flying home on Monday evening and would not see Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash, who is due to meet Dr. Ghali Tuesday.

"I expect next to meet with him (Mr. Denkash) when the secretary-general of the United Nations will have felt that enough progress has been made and he will call an international meeting."

Lebanese hostage crisis stalled

BEIRUT (R) — U.N. efforts to end the Lebanese hostage crisis are deadlocked, pro-Iranian sources and diplomats said Monday.

"The hostage issued is really blocked for the moment... there is lots of talk but nothing substantial is happening," Western diplomat told Reuters.

"All the actors are waiting for the others to move."

Although American and British hostages in Lebanon were freed last year the tangled affair still involves two Germans held by fundamentalist kidnappers, missing Israeli servicemen and their Lebanese militia allies and finally Arab prisoners held by Israel and in Europe.

Pro-Iranian sources in Beirut and American Jewish sources in New York last week expected mediation by U.N. envoy Giandomenico Picco to produce an imminent exchange of prisoners between Israel and Lebanese groups.

But a leader of the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God), Sheikh Subhi Toufaily, said Sunday. "Trading the prisoners from Israel and its militia ally for the prisoners they hold is now out of the question."

Sources said U.N. efforts were blocked by Israel's insistence that any swap had to free airman Ron Arad, the only one of six missing Israelis believed alive.

Pro-Iranian sources said efforts to free the Germans were also stalled, in spite of Iranian pressure on their captors.

Heinrich Struëbig and Thomas Kemper, the last Western hostages in Lebanon, are held by followers of Abdul Hadi Hamadi, the elder brother of two brothers imprisoned in Germany, Mohammad Ali and Abbas.

A pro-Iranian source said the captors of the Germans "want Bonn to free Abbas before freeing one of their hostages. Once this is done they want Germany to reduce the sentence of Mohammad Ali before freeing the second hostage."

Bonn has repeatedly said it would make no deals.

Mohammad Ali Hamadi was sentenced to life imprisonment for his part in the 1985 hijacking of a TWA passenger plane during

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Economic hardship, security fears haunt Lebanon's peace

BEIRUT (AP) — More than a year after President Elias Hrawi's government ended Lebanon's 15-year civil war, economic hardship and fear of renewed violence still haunt a battered nation.

Mr. Hrawi, backed by Syrian military muscle, has disbanded and disarmed the Muslim and Christian militias that carved up Lebanon into sectarian mini-states, and has restored state authority over parts of the country.

With the gunnery gone from the streets, Muslims and Christians have been mixing openly in Beirut for the first time in years.

The notorious green line, which divided Beirut and symbolised Lebanon's fragmentation and anarchy, has been dismantled.

But Muslims and Christians have not started living in each other's areas as they did before the war began in 1975, apparently because they fear deep-rooted hostilities could erupt again into sectarian violence.

These fears, particularly prevalent among the outnumbered Maronite Catholics, who are unhappy with Syrian domination, were given substance Dec. 30 when a car bomb exploded in the Muslim Basta district, killing 30 people and wounding 120.

Hassan Abu Taam, a Shiite Muslim who drives his van into Christian east Beirut every day to sell vegetables, said he stopped visiting the Christian sector after the bombing, the worst in several years.

No one claimed responsibility, but Mr. Abu Taam feared reprisals.

"I thought that if such a bomb killed a Christian leader, young Christians would probably take revenge by killing Muslims and I didn't want to be there," Mr. Abu Taam said.

"I stayed away from east

Beirut for about a week. But I had to overcome my fear because vegetable prices are higher in east Beirut and I can't afford to lose that income. Life is too expensive," he said.

Mr. Abu Taam lived in the Christian district of Rummaneh before the war broke out. He has since lived in a west Beirut apartment and has no plans to go back to Rummaneh.

"It's quiet now, but who knows what's going to happen next," he said. "I'm not saying the war's going to break out again, but most probably we'll have bombings and assassinations. That kind of thing could provoke limited reprisals and I feel safer living among my own people," he added.

"It's true we have peace, but our economic situation is unbearable," said Ahmad Hasbani, a Sunni Muslim.

The 48-year-old bank employee said his salary of nearly \$600 a month is not enough to support him, his wife, two sons and two daughters.

Labour union studies show that between 1989 and December 1991 school tuition and health care costs tripled, transportation and clothing prices doubled and food prices rose by 40 per cent.

In August, Mr. Hasbani borrowed \$3,000 from the bank, bought a van for \$2,000 and spent the rest converting it into a mobile shop to boost his income.

"Every day after my work at the bank finishes at 2 p.m., I take my van out to the suburbs," he said. "I go to Christian and Muslim areas and buy and sell almost anything."

Electrician George Awad, a Maronite from the Christian mountain resort of Brummana, goes to west Beirut every day, knocking on doors looking for work.

"I've got lots of custom-

ers," he said. "Muslim families use me because and I'm good and I'm a Christian."

He explained, as he repaired a washing machine in a west Beirut apartment, that families prefer hiring a Christian to work in their homes while their menfolk are out.

"Criminals, Muslim or Christian, rarely operate outside their own communities. So families prefer to hire maintenance men from other sects. They know I'd be crazy to try anything," he said.

The economy is in tatters and Mr. Hrawi's hard-pressed government is hustling donations to a \$1 billion reconstruction fund.

About a quarter of the pre-war population, the one million people displaced by the war, cannot afford proper accommodation. Most squat in deserted hotels, beach huts and war-damaged apartment blocks near the old green line.

But despite the hardship, Beirut's nightlife is booming again. It is nowhere near the free-wheeling intensity of before the war, when the city was the playground of the Middle East.

But for those who can afford it, there are plenty of ways to shut out the reminders of the war — the gutted buildings, the garbage piled in the streets, the 12-hour power cuts, the poverty.

At new year's couples paid \$400 to get into the Costa Prava Club in Khade, on Beirut's southern outskirts, to see the famed Egyptian singer Amer Diab.

Across town in Gimme's, one of the most popular nightspots, jewelry-laden young women in skintight dresses and Gucci clad dandies forked up \$150 — the average monthly salary for government employees — to boogie the night away sipping French champagne.



Yasser Arafat

Arafat to receive Indian award

NEW DELHI (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat arrived in India on Monday to accept the first Indira Gandhi International Award for Justice and Harmony.

Mr. Arafat was accorded the 21-gun salute reserved for heads of state as he arrived at the presidential palace and embraced Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and President Ramaswamy Venkatarman.

In a brief exchange with reporters after the ceremony, he said he would welcome Indian participation in the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Mr. Arafat said the Palestinian role in the next round of talks, scheduled for Jan. 28-30 in Moscow, would be determined after a meeting of Arab foreign ministers.

Syria and Lebanon said this weekend they would not participate in the Moscow meeting, the third in the round of Arab-Israeli talks that started last October in Madrid.

"Until now, nothing has been settled, because after two days we have a very important meeting on the level of foreign Arab ministers," the PLO leader said.

He declined to say what impact the anticipated collapse of the Israeli government would have on the talks, saying "this trouble within the (Israeli) cabinet" was a matter for the Israelis to settle.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir lost his parliamentary majority Sunday when two small right-wing parties quit the government to protest Israel's participation in the peace talks.

The opposition Labour Party said it would try to topple Mr. Shamir's Likud bloc through a no-confidence motion.

The PLO is not formally participating in the peace talks, but Palestinians who support the movement are included in the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Mr. Arafat declined to elaborate on what sort of role India might play in the peace talks but said he would discuss the question with Indian leaders during his three-day visit to New Delhi.

The PLO leader, dressed in his customary dark green battle fatigues and black-and-white checkered headscarf, has long had cordial ties with Indian leaders. India was one of the first non-Arab nations to recognise Palestine and accord the PLO office here the status of an embassy.

On Tuesday he will become the first recipient of the Indira Gandhi Award for International Harmony and Justice, which commemorates the Indian prime minister who was assassinated in 1984. The award is given by the Indian Council on World Affairs.

Israeli unemployment will top 16% without more aid

TEL AVIV (AP) — Unemployment will top 16 per cent by 1996 if the United States rejects Israel's request for \$10 billion in loan guarantees to house an influx of immigrants, newspapers reported Monday.

The newspaper reports, quoting a finance ministry study, reflect increasing fears that President George Bush will refuse the loan guarantees because of Israel's expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

On Monday, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir planned to dramatise government support for settlements by planting saplings in the occupied West Bank.

The projected 16 per cent unemployment is part of a 160-page finance ministry report to be submitted to the U.S. Congress next week in advance of a February debate over the Israeli aid request.

Congress postponed the debate for three months after an appeal from Mr. Bush, who feared that granting the additional aid to Israel could jeopardise the start of Middle East peace talks.

Since then American officials have repeatedly condemned the settlements, built on land seized in the 1967 war, as obstacles to peace with the territories' 1.7 million Palestinians.

Mr. Shamir, meanwhile, faces challenges from left and right in parliament.

The opposition Labour Party was expected to submit a no-confidence motion Monday over the government's handling of the economy.

Mr. Shamir is at risk after two

far-right partners quit his coalition Sunday over objections to Israel's participation in U.S.-sponsored peace talks, leaving him with 59 supporters in the 120-seat parliament.

The finance ministry report, quoted in major Israeli dailies, says Israel expects immigration from the former Soviet Union to reach about one million within five years.

It says the estimated cost of absorbing the immigrants is \$26.5 billion, which must be raised from the U.S.-backed loans and contributions from Jewish communities.

Israel asked for the U.S. loan guarantees in instalments of \$2 billion over the next five years. This would be in addition to the \$3 billion in civilian and military U.S. aid that Israel gets annually.

Without the loan guarantees, 360,000 Israelis would end up jobless, or about 16.2 per cent of the labour force, the reports added. Unemployment is currently about 11 per cent.

Finance ministry officials could not immediately be reached for comment on the reports.

Even with the loan guarantee debate looming in Congress, Israel has persisted with controversial settlement construction in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Forty-five trailer homes were towed to expand the Beth El settlement near the West Bank town of Ramallah on Sunday.

Left-wing legislators estimated that at least \$1.5 billion was spent for Jewish housing in the occupied territories last year, or about 25 per cent of all public construction.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Spaniard with heroin in stomach held

BAHRAIN (AP) — A Spaniard who swallowed 328 grammes of heroin in small rubber balls in an alleged attempt to smuggle the drug into Spain, is on trial here after passing out on a flight from Bangkok to Barcelona. The Al Ayam daily reported that the man, who was not identified, was indicted Saturday on a charge of possessing narcotics in what the newspaper termed "the first case of its kind" in the central Gulf state. The daily said the heroin was contained in 160 rubber balls. It reported that the man fainted during the flight from Thailand and the pilot made an unscheduled landing at Bahrain to get the man medical treatment. The drugs were recovered in hospital. The daily did not say when the incident occurred and police officials were not able to confirm the arrest. Al Ayam said that the Spaniard's attorney pleaded for a light sentence, arguing that the drugs were not destined for Bahrain. The presiding judge in the no-jury court will pass sentence Jan. 25, the daily said. Drug smugglers regularly pay people, known as "mules", to carry narcotics for them, either in their baggage or by ingestion. Authorities in the United States and Europe estimate one in 10 "mules" are caught.

Two arrested in Egypt with heroin

CAIRO (R) — Egyptian narcotics police arrested two Ghanaians on Sunday after 180 heroin capsules were pumped out of their stomachs, airport police said. They said narcotics police had been tipped off that an international drugs ring had recruited Ghanaians to smuggle heroin from South-East Asia to the West African country. The drugs were processed there and shipped to Europe and the United States, they said. The two men, one aged 31 and the other 25, were arrested when they stopped over in Cairo from Bangkok and had two kilograms of heroin in their stomachs, police said.

Iran lifts ban on foreign auto imports

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran has lifted a ban on importing several makes of foreign autos from the Gulf states and one official estimated as many as 10,000 cars will be purchased in the next two months. The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported. The agency said in a dispatch from Dubai that the makes include Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Volkswagen, Peugeot, Volvo 400, Mitsubishi, Honda, Subaru and Toyota. The ban, which has been in force for the last decade, was lifted Saturday, IRNA reported. The move will open up Iran once again to foreign automakers. The Islamic Republic has recently signed agreements with France's Peugeot and Britain's AWD-Bedford automakers for assembly plants in Iran. The development came amid President Hashemi Rafsanjani's drive to rebuild bridges with the West to secure badly needed investment and revitalise Iran's moribund economy.

Israeli environment expert in Egypt

CAIRO (R) — An Israeli environmental expert arrived in Cairo Sunday on a four-day official visit to probe ways of cooperating with Egypt in solving pollution problems. Yoram Avnimelech, chief scientist at Israel's environment ministry, told reporters: "Israel is prepared to cooperate with its neighbours to solve environmental problems especially sea pollution which affects tourism which Egypt and Israel depend on," he said.

Cheney: Saddam will be eventually toppled

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defence Secretary Dick Cheney has cautioned against being "overly fixated on Saddam Hussein," but predicted the Iraqi leader eventually will be toppled.

Mr. Cheney and other administration officials declined to talk about any U.S. contingency plans for aiding in President Saddam's ouster.

A Kurdish guerrilla leader in northern Iraq said a reported plan for the United States to help rebel groups in Iraq could work if the opposition forces united their efforts.

The New York Times reported in its Sunday edition that Saudi Arabia was pressuring the Bush administration to organise an allied campaign to supply arms and intelligence to Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq as well as to Shiite Muslim fighters in the south.

The Saudis reportedly want the United States and other allies to unleash an air campaign to help rebel forces defeat the elite Republican Guard and oust the Iraqi leader, the newspaper reported.

President George Bush, in a statement Thursday marking the first anniversary of the Gulf war, called again upon the Iraqi people and military to overthrow "thousands of brave Iraqis who are resisting Saddam's rule."

But National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft denied that the United States was readying any military action against Baghdad.

Mr. Cheney called the times story "overblown." However, he said that "if we were engaged in such planning, obviously I couldn't talk about it."

Mr. Cheney, on CBS' "Face the Nation," said President Saddam "is in considerable difficulty."

"He doesn't control the north end of Iraq, the Kurds do. He has a weak control in the south, where Shiites are," Mr. Cheney said. "His base inside Iraq is steadily shrinking and eroding. I think eventually he will, in fact, be toppled."

An administration official who asked to remain anonymous said: "It's not surprising that both people inside Iraq as well as neighbouring countries would be happy to see Saddam leave the scene."

Reports of a recent wave of executions in the Iraqi military have led U.S. officials to believe that President Saddam may feel increasingly worried about a coup.

While Mr. Cheney said he was convinced the Iraqi leader could hold survive over the long term, "the important thing for us ... is not to be overly fixated on Saddam Hussein."

"We liberated Kuwait, kept a madman from taking control of the world's supply of oil and developing nuclear weapons," Mr. Cheney said. "As long as we maintain our inspection regime (with) U.N. sanctions in place, he won't be able to develop nuclear weapons."

Arshad Tewfik, formerly a senior member of Iraq's ruling Baath Party, told the Associated Press Sunday that the Saudis and the other Arab states in the Gulf want President Saddam ousted so that the main source of instability in the oil-rich region is removed.

Mr. Tewfik, who was Iraq's ambassador to Spain until he resigned last March, was contacted by telephone in Saudi Arabia.

He said organised opposition to President is mushrooming within the ruling Baath Party, including its upper echelons, and the army as conditions inside Iraq deteriorate.

He said disaffection has spread to the Republican Guard divisions which form the backbone of the Iraq's military and have been

one of the regime's main pillars in recent years.

President Saddam was constantly arresting and executing army officers suspected of plotting against him, but has not eliminated organised opposition to his rule. Mr. Tewfik said.

He said that anti-Saddam cells began forming within the regime last May.

"I've been a Baath Party member and I know its labyrinthine cells are developing and spreading," Mr. Tewfik said.

His claims could not be independently confirmed. But travellers from Iraq in recent weeks have reported growing hostility to the regime as U.N. sanctions imposed after the Iraqis invaded Kuwait cause worsening hardship.

There have also been signs of division with the elite in recent weeks amid repeated composed mainly of relatives shuffles in the leadership.

But hopes that Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war would foment a military coup — the allies favoured scenario — have so far come to nothing. And the opposition movement in exile remains splintered and unable to mount a credible campaign.

However, to support his claims of growing opposition inside the regime, Mr. Tewfik telefaxed to the AP bureau in Manama a copy of what he said was the first bulletin issued by the reported opposition to the Baath Party in Baghdad.

The four-page, typewritten communique dated Jan. 1, which Mr. Tewfik said he got earlier Sunday "through Turkey," was signed by "the National Leadership of the party."

"Our work at home has taken a long stride," it said. But it noted that although its cells now extend to Iraq's provinces, "the scourge will not be completely without the downfall of the despot who has been defeated politically, militarily and morally."

It said that once President Saddam was toppled, all the opposition forces would form a provisional government with Iraq's rebellious Kurds and Shiite Muslims and work out a formula for free elections.

There was no way to verify whether the statement was genuine.

Meanwhile, there was no official comment from Saudi officials on the New York Times report.

However, the Saudis have been in close contact with the leaders of the Iraqi opposition movements in exile over the last 18 months.

Mr. Tewfik said that opposition leaders in exile are expected to gather in Riyadh soon to discuss ways to topple President Saddam and to consult the Saudi government.

Among them will be Ahmad Baqr Al Hakim, leader of the main Shiite opposition movement, the Tehran-based Supreme Assembly for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, he said.

The assembly has several thousands fighters, who joined Iranian forces battling Iraq in the 1980-88 Gulf war and took part in the ill-fated Shiite rebellion last March.

Mr. Tewfik declined to comment on the New York Times report. But he noted that Riyadh was "one mind ... with the aspirations of the Iraqi opposition that Iraq be stable and unified."

"We don't differ on that. What the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wants for Iraq is what we want," he added.

"The presence of the regime in Iraq means the destruction of Iraq and that's a danger to the entire region."

Mr. Tewfik stressed that President Saddam had to be toppled by the Iraqis themselves.

Iran spreads influence to Africa through Sudan

By Dalia Baligh
The Associated Press

KHARTOUM — A month after the visit of Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani, hundreds of posters of him and the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini remain plastered along the streets of this dusty capital.

Iranians, conspicuous by their distinctive garb, throng the lobby and restaurants of the Khartoum Hilton Hotel. Most are members of "cultural delegations" on temporary assignments to the greatly expanded Iranian embassy.

Sudan is pursuing a full-force Islamisation programme like the one that took place in Iran under Ayatollah Khomeini. The growing contacts between Khartoum and Tehran worry heavily Muslim Middle Eastern and African countries that have resisted fundamentalism.

Iran is providing Sudan with oil, weapons and hundreds of military experts who Western diplomats say are training a Muslim paramilitary force. A senior Western diplomat said he believes the force's main function is to ensure that Omar Hassan Al-Bashir's Islamic fundamentalist government stays in power.

The London-based Al Quds Al Arabi newspaper in early January quoted General al-Bashir as saying that "military cooperation between Sudan and Iran is not directed against any other state."

That statement is less than reassuring to other countries in the region, who fear that Iran seeks to implant its brand of militant Islam in a new area to make up for lost power in Lebanon.

Western diplomats and Sudanese analysts who have monitored the rapidly developing Sudan-Iran alliance, say it has been progressing on two levels — military and economic.

The two countries have signed a trade agreement worth \$300 million a year, promising, among other things, 3.4 million barrels of much-needed Iranian oil for Sudan. Iran also has started shipments of \$20 million in light weapons, ammunition and military uniforms.

Government-controlled newspapers speak of military and security cooperation with Iran, but give few details to Sudan's 26 million people.

Western diplomats have been able to glean some more details. One diplomat said

hundreds of Iranian military experts are kept in camps outside of Khartoum.

He and other diplomats agreed to discuss Iranian involvement in Sudan only on condition of anonymity.

Iranian experts are believed to be training the approximately 85,000-member Popular Defence Force, civilians who are conscripted for three-month stints of Islamic indoctrination and military training.

Reports from Washington and elsewhere have said thousands of members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards are conducting the training and that fighters from Lebanon's Hizbollah militia are also among those being trained.

Asked specifically about the Revolutionary Guards, one of 13 members of Gen. Bashir's junta, Colonel Mohammad Al Amin Khalifa, told the Associated Press: "It's a lie. We don't need them."

Since overthrowing a civilian government, Gen. Bashir's junta has executed and jailed political opponents. That has left the opposition cowed about voicing their concerns over Iran's growing influence.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Bouli
18:05	Les Tournes Nijie
18:30	Marc et Sophie
19:00	News in French
19:15	Varities
19:30	News in Hebrew
19:40	News in Arabic
20:10	Evening shade
21:10	Colour in the Greek
22:00	News in English
22:20	Tunus Regained

PRAYER TIMES

05:10	Fajr
06:31	(Sunrise) Duha
11:47	Dhuhr
14:38	Asr
17:43	Maghreb
18:23	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedisch.	Tel. 510740
Assemblies of God Church.	Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	637440.

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terrazola Church Tel: 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel.	623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 625383.	Tel. 625543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.	717331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.	775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 717751.	
Armenian International Church Tel.	683326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.	811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 623634.	654932.
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691.	

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

It will be partly cloudy to fair and winds will be light and variable. In Amman, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	10/11
Azraq	10/20
Deserts	2/13
Jordan Valley	10/19

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 8, Azraq 18. Humidity readings: Amman 95 per cent, Azraq 45 per cent.	
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USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:	
Dr. Khalid M'addi	743500
Dr. Khalil Abdo	782392
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim	891256
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh	736123
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Aqana pharmacy	637053
Nairouth pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmehlan pharmacy	637660

IRBID:	
Dr. Radwan Al Saad	(—)
Al Shura'a pharmacy	(275825)

ZARQA:	
Dr. Akram Haddad	(—)
Khalifah pharmacy	965417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Price Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	897467
Complaints	845845
Amman Municipality	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	



PRINCE VISITS SHARIF ZEID — His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad bin Hussein, the personal representative of His Majesty King Hussein, visited the Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker.

No arrangements made for compensating returnees, official says

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Foreign Ministry Monday denied a report published in the local daily Sawt Al Shaab that arrangements have been taken to offer compensation to those sustaining losses or damages to property as a result of the Gulf crisis.

No arrangements whatsoever have been made to offer compensation from the special U.N. fund to those who suffered losses, said a ministry spokesman.

The ministry is still awaiting information on this subject so that further action can be taken about the methods of offering compensation. There is no truth in reports stating that the ministry has prepared a framework and special regulations for offering

compensation, said the spokesman.

The daily Monday quoted ministry sources as saying that the ministry received special forms to be filled by beneficiaries for sustaining losses resulting from Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

The paper said that the forms issued by the U.N. will be distributed to those leaving Kuwait or Iraq between August 1990 and March 1991 and that \$2,500 will be given to each member of the family. The paper also said that 326,000 Jordanian and Palestinian expatriates who were forced to flee Kuwait will benefit from the compensation through these arrangements.

The Foreign Ministry has not requested any person or organisation to distribute the forms for the compensation, as the daily had reported, the official spokesman noted.

Referring to the paper's report that the United Nations has fixed one and a half years for beneficiaries to submit their applications for compensation, the spokesman said that the U.N. has not yet announced the arrival of any cash for its special fund for compensation. The daily had also quoted the head of a special committee representing the expatriates as saying that first compensations will benefit the needy expatriates.

JCCC acquires financing from Islamic Development Bank

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Commercial Centres Corporation (JCCC) has concluded a deal with the Jeddah based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) to ensure financing for Jordanian exporters' transactions, especially for the sale of national products to member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

JCCC Director General Rima Khalaf said that under the terms of the agreement, the JCCC is to be considered as a national agency acting for the IDB in financing exporting operations to encourage trade among Islamic nations.

The main concern of the JCCC is to open new markets for Jordanian products in addition to maintaining the traditional markets that import Jordanian phosphate, especially those in southeast Asia and Europe, said Dr. Khalaf.

The JCCC, she said, is trying to achieve that goal through trade protocols concluded between Jordan and other countries, through trade centres which exist in six countries and through an information centre which provides information to Jordanian exporters about the trade situation and market conditions abroad, especially in Europe.

Dr. Khalaf noted that the JCCC has trade centres in Cairo, Tunis, Baghdad, Casablanca, Sanaa and Moscow which try to promote the sale of Jordanian products.

The JCCC's other activities in this respect take the form of holding trade exhibitions and participating in international trade fairs, Dr. Khalaf noted.

She said that Jordan has already organised trade exhibitions in Egypt, Iraq, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen, the United

Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Oman and participated in trade fairs held in Berlin, Bucharest, Tripoli, Taipei and Argentina in addition to the local trade fairs which displayed Jordanian industrial products. Through the trade fairs and others, she said, Jordan was trying to boost national exports.

The JCCC's Study Centre directs its efforts to research work concerning the type of products in foreign markets which compete with national products and the potential markets which could import Jordanian goods, Dr. Khalaf said.

She said that the JCCC also organises visits by Jordanian producers and businessmen to foreign markets with the aim of orienting them on the nature of products they require for their consumers.

German Wind Quintet to perform tonight

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, the National Music Conservatory / Noor Al Hussein Foundation and the Goethe Institute in Amman present the German Wind Quintet / Detmolder Kammermusik Solists.

A unique concert is scheduled at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) today at 8 p.m. at the main theatre.

Babette Dorn on piano, Mathias Grunewald on oboe, Til Renner on clarinet, Markus Frank on horn and Peter Brechtel on bassoon will perform works by Beethoven, Mozart and Russian composer Mikhail Glinka. All performers are soloists who have studied with the greatest masters in Germany and have performed with major music ensembles and orchestras.

The programme includes the Quintet in E flat major Op. 16 by Beethoven, the 'Trio Pathétique' for clarinet, bassoon and piano by Glinka and finally the Quintet in E flat major by Mozart.

The concert comes in a beautiful series of similar events that the National Music Conservatory started towards the end of 1991, interrupted only temporarily by the end of year — new year celebrations and naturally by the unexpected weather conditions that prevailed earlier this month in the country.

The conservatory has several other recitals and concerts on their schedule coming soon, ranging from opera singing to Japanese traditional drummers. The Jordan Times will regularly be covering these events with previews and announcements.

Officials visit Water Ministry

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Public Works and Housing Saad Hayel Surour and the visiting Syrian Minister of Housing and the accompanying delegation called at the Ministry of Water and Irrigation.

The two ministers met with Water and Irrigation Minister Samir Qawar and reviewed with him the activities and achievements of the ministry.

They later visited Khirbet Al Samra Water Recycling Plant and a number of the ministry's projects in the Jordan Valley.

Environmental awareness campaign being developed

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Steering Committee of the national committee entrusted with carrying out a national strategy for the protection of the Jordanian environment Monday discussed plans to spread awareness among the members of the public about the need to protect the environment.

The meeting, chaired by Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Dr. Abdul Razzak Tubishat heard a programme to be implemented in this regard prepared by Ministry of Information Secretary General Trad Al Fayez, who heads a special informational committee on development and the protection of the environment.

Mr. Fayez outlined the main ideas of the plans which he said would be implemented through cooperation with youth clubs, municipal councils, charitable organisations and other institutions.

Discussion at the meeting covered aspects of the national environmental strategy which, according to ministry sources, will be made public later.

The plan, they said, takes into account cooperation among the various government departments with special coordination with the Ministry of Education.

Jordan, Libya sign wideranging cooperation agreements

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and Libya Monday signed a number of agreements and protocols designed to promote bilateral cooperation in several fields and opening the way for increased trade exchanges and the employment of Jordanian workers in Libya.

The agreements are not only economic in nature, but they are also of vital importance covering various aspects of life in the two countries, said Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour, who signed the agreements with visiting Libyan Minister of Higher Education Dr. Ibrahim Abu Khuzam.

Dr. Ensour said that the agreements will serve the higher interests of the Arab people in the two countries.

Dr. Abu Khuzam said after the signing ceremony that the agreements constituted one single step on a long road of fruitful cooperation designed to attain integration between Libya and Jordan. These agreements, he said, represent the minimum level of cooperation between Arab states. Dr. Abu Khuzam noted.

Dr. Abu Khuzam described his visit to Jordan as successful and achieving its purpose, noting that the two sides have reached agreement on exporting JD 1 million worth of Jordanian products to Libyan markets and that the deal will be executed immediately.

Dr. Abu Khuzam said that the first deal will pave the way for other deals to be agreed on during the upcoming joint economic committee meetings due to be held in Libya in November 1992.

In trade, the two sides agreed on exchanging industrial and natural resources and agricultural products. They also agreed to exempt these products from all



Minister of Industry and Trade Abdullah Ensour (centre) signs cooperation agreement Monday alongside Libyan Minister of Higher Education Dr. Ibrahim Abu Khuzam (Petra photo)

customs duty and other taxes, providing facilities for their entry in the markets of Libya and Jordan.

They agreed to settlements in free currency and through barter deals and decided to set up trade centres in Tripoli and Amman to promote the sale of Libyan and Jordanian goods.

In information and culture, the two sides agreed to open offices for the national Jordanian and Libyan news agencies in Tripoli and Amman and to exchange television programmes that focus attention on the achievements of both country. Libyan and Jordanian folk troupes and artists will be encouraged to visit each other's country, they said.

In tourism, the two sides agreed to encourage visits by

tourist groups, offering them facilities to travel and to launch cooperation in training personnel in hotel management.

In education and higher education, the two sides agreed that Jordanian teachers will continue to be employed in Libyan schools provided they are seconded by the concerned ministries in Jordan. They will also offer each other scholarships, school textbooks and educational publications and agreed to promote cooperation among the higher educational institutions in the two countries.

Libya has agreed to offer scholarships to 20 Jordanians in its universities while Jordan will offer Libyans 30 seats at its own universities, according to the agreement.

Libya and Jordan agreed to special arrangements for their respective cargo vessels, offering them special facilities to promote maritime transport between the two countries.

In vocational training, they announced their agreement on exchanging expertise in training instructors and on training technicians.

The Libyan minister earlier met Minister of Labour Abdul Karim Al Kabanit to discuss labour-related issues and vocational training facilities.

Also on Monday the Libyan delegation called at the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and examined its programmes. Dr. Abu Khuzam expressed willingness to cooperate with scientific institutions in Libya and Jordan.

Bani Hamida team returns after exhibition in Germany

By Kirk Albrecht
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A team from the Bani Hamida/Save The Children women's project returned from Germany this past week after attending the Domotex Hannover international floor coverings exhibition, pleased with results but more aware of what they are up against as they try to enter the world arena.

"It wasn't easy at all," says marketing manager Helena Sayegh.

This was Bani Hamida's first foray into international waters, and they were the new kids on the block in Hannover.

"When we entered, it was overwhelming," says project director Ghada Habash. "The space that other exhibits took was as big as 300 square metres, with a grand piano and bar in the centre! Our area was 24 square metres."

Bani Hamida had the smallest floor space of any of the 30 exhibits in their hall, one of four buildings dedicated to hand-made floor coverings. The team representing the project, consisting of Mrs. Habash, Ms. Sayegh and designer Kelly Miller, got off to a rocky start the day they arrived.

"We arrived and there were no rugs — there was nothing there," tells Mrs. Habash. "They had delivered the rugs two days before and we weren't there to sign for them, so the shipping people left."

To get the rugs back in order and to have their wares to display required calling countless people, none of whom would speak English, even though the Bani Hamida staff believed all of them could.

The delay meant Bani Hamida was still getting ready the

first day of the exhibition while others were busy at work.

"They were already conducting business on the first day; by the second day they were done with their business and there was partying and celebrating," explained Mrs. Habash. "We thought we would go in and day by day do business, but business was done by the end of the first day."

Helena Sayegh was surprised at the competition and business-or-nothing approach of most of the buyers. "I would start talking about the women of Bani Hamida and the buyers would tell me, 'I don't care, tell me about the product.'"

Balancing a development project and a business was frustrating in the big leagues of the floor covering world, she said.

"I was trying to explain to them (buyers) how we work and that if it rains, sometimes production might be late," says Ms. Sayegh. "They said if we don't prove credible the first time, they can't work with us."

"Here we invest so much in the women, but there nobody cares," she adds. "Just the product and the delivery date, that's all that matters."

The Bani Hamida project employs over 700 women in the production of rugs, wall hangings, and cushions under the umbrella of Save The Children project here in Jordan. Save The Children is a Westport, Conn.-based organisation that focuses on development programmes.

The purpose of the project is to allow women help their families by providing work they can do while maintaining their roles as mother and wife at home.

An initial grant from USAID, which runs out this February, got the project

started. The Bani Hamida staff has gotten the project to the point of self-sufficiency, but express gratitude for the funds which enabled them to begin.

Ghada Habash says the team learned a lot from the experience in Germany. Next time they would take more rugs, since many buyers made disparaging comments about the lack of variety in their designs. And, she says, they would take their own furnishings to make their booth look more authentic, more Jordanian.

However, the biggest lesson is that the Domotex show is not for Bani Hamida. "I think next year we want to go to Heimtext, which is a home furnishings show," she says. "That would be geared more to our market."

The time in Hannover had many bright spots, despite a bit of rough going. They got a large European department store, which Mrs. Habash has been courting for some time, to place an order. "I was very pleased, because we had tried to approach them several times

and we didn't have any luck," she says.

Helena was excited by the interest the Bani Hamida rugs generated. "Many were curious to see what is this new product, which is so different from everything else."

"A lot of people kept telling us that we had the nicest things there," she adds, with obvious pride.

But the proudest moment came from meeting Jordanians and Arabs at the exhibition. "Some of them left their booths just to see Bani Hamida there," says Ms. Sayegh. "They couldn't believe that Jordan is taking part in this — it was wonderful."

Mrs. Habash adds that the women of Bani Hamida, who she visited soon after returning to Jordan, are equally proud of their participation in such a big event.

Domotex was a small step in the right direction, says Mrs. Habash. "The best thing we did was to have our name there to start with — that was the biggest challenge."

Jordan to attend Gulf war crimes tribunal

By Serene Halasa

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordan will attend a war crimes tribunal on Feb. 29, in New York, and will submit a list of charges against the American-led coalition for war crimes sustained during the Gulf war, a local official said Monday.

Bassam Haddadin, president of the International Jordanian Committee for Investigation of U.S. Crimes in the Middle East, said his committee will add additional charges to the list of the International Commission of Inquiry on U.S. and Allied War Crimes in the Middle East.

"We will submit a copy of charges against the American-led coalition for repercussions Jordan sustained during and after the Gulf war," said Mr. Haddadin, who is also a leftist member of Parliament. "This list will include primarily items of importance such as the illegal closure of the port of Aqaba (ship harassment by allied forces) and bombing of Jordanian truck drivers carrying oil from Iraq among others."

The International Commission of Inquiry on U.S. and Allied War Crimes in the Middle East was established at the height of the Gulf war by former American attorney general, Ramsey Clark. Mr. Clark, who visited Iraq during the war, criticised the international media for believing American claims of a "clean war."

Following his departure

from Iraq, Mr. Clark vowed to bring to world attention the war crimes committed by the U.S. and its allies against Iraq. Mr. Clark had maintained that the U.S. had violated international law by its excessive use of force against Iraq and had overstepped the limits of U.N. Resolution 661 authorising the use of force to drive Iraq out of Kuwait.

In reply to Mr. Clark's call, local committees in 20 countries around the world were formed. These countries include Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Algeria, Turkey, Italy, France, Greece, Cyprus, Sweden as well as many states in the U.S. "These committees assisted the international commission by supplying it with proofs, information and eyewitnesses to collaborate the 19 charges directed against the U.S. and its Gulf war allies," Mr. Haddadin said.

The local committees were formed under the auspices of the international commission with the presence of representatives from the commission.

In Jordan, Mr. Haddadin said, the committee groups a number of parliamentarians and political observers as well

as local reporters. He added that the first session was a closed meeting in reply to a directive from the government.

The war crimes tribunal will be the final stage of a series of hearings that have gathered testimony from the 20 countries over the past 8 months. A panel of international judges will preside over the tribunal scheduled to start at the end of February. Following the tribunal sessions, the charges will be transferred to an international court.

Mr. Haddadin said he hoped that the tribunal sessions will be able to score a "political victory" echoing his doubts about American compliance with any other form of international law. He stressed that their (the tribunal's) work is aimed against the U.S. administration, which "manipulated" its people through the media and campaigned for a war against Iraq.

"Our first aim is to reveal the truth about the inhumane and undemocratic actions of a country (the U.S.) that claims to uphold human rights and democracy," Mr. Haddadin said. "We will keep trying until we unveil America's ugly face."

Eight people injured in fire

DEIR ABBE SAEED (Agencies) — Eight people were injured when fire broke out in a house in Al Ashrafieh town in Al Koura District. Director of the Irbid Civil Defence Department Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Rahman Al Nasser said department personnel managed to quickly extinguish the fire and helped in evacuating the injured to Deir Abee Saeed Health Centre.

Jordan Times

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Established 1975

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Mixing apples and oranges

THE BREAKUP of Yugoslavia like the breakup of the former Soviet Union illustrates once again that a country glued together artificially would not stand the test of time. Sooner or later various ethnic peoples within a certain country will jump at the first opportunity to pull out of the "unreal" union and form their own separate states, especially if their size is big enough. In a way, this is unfortunate. There has always been hope that different peoples can join together to form a federation or confederation as is the case in the U.S. and Canada. Western Europe is another fine example of how once warring states belonging to different nationalities and objectives can still forge a union on the basis of enlightened supra-national interests. It seems, however, peoples would wish first to attain their national identity and satisfy their respective national interest before plunging into the more sophisticated level of confederation on a basis that supercedes limited nationalism.

So the cases of Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union have clear implications for other countries containing sizeable minorities, including of course Israel. One wonders for how long the growing population of "Israeli Arabs" would continue to support their integration in a state which is avowedly Jewish and Zionist. The least that one would expect in this vein is some kind of federation between the two peoples under one umbrella. Yet Israel has made no bones about keeping a large population of Arabs as Israelis! At the same time, it has yet to grant the Arab people equal rights and equal opportunities. This state of affairs should prompt creative thinking on the part of all concerned, including Israel, to come up with an ultimate solution for both the so-called Israeli Arabs and their brethren in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. There is no sensible or effective way to separate the fate of the Arab Palestinians who became Israeli citizens from that of the other Palestinians residing in the occupied Arab territories. Such an enlightened approach to one problem pertaining to one people may go a long way to end the stalemate in the ongoing thinking on the Arab-Israeli problem in general and the Palestinian case in particular. In essence this means going back to basics and to the old formula based on the partition of Palestine.

To be sure there are other countries in this region of the world that sooner or later would be affected by the precedents established by the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. Even Arab efforts to unite is bound to be influenced by such past experiences, albeit we are talking about the same people when it comes to Arab unity and essentially different nationalities in the cases of Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union. Yet, through time, even different Arab peoples have hardened their own sense of identity and came to view themselves for all intents and purposes as different from their brethren in other countries in the Arab World. We have seen signs of this growing parochial nationalism in practically all the Arab states which have developed to such an extent that it would be utterly naive to contemplate a swift union between the various Arab countries. The Arab peoples in North Africa have many things in common with the Arabs of the east, yet both regions have many differences. Nonetheless, even on the level of North Africa, it would be hard to imagine how the Arabs of Egypt would want to pool their resources and fate with the Arabs of Algeria or Morocco for example. The same applies in the Middle East, especially if the Arab Gulf states are included in the overall picture. To sum up, unity between different nationalities would require a minimum level of development and sophistication that is still not present in most of the regions of the world.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Monday bitterly criticised oil-rich Arab states for continuing to finance the cost of a war launched on their nation and an aggression continued against the Iraqi people. No one knows exactly the real cost of the war which the Arab states are financing, but we can guess that this cost could pay all the debts of the Arab states and sustain the lives of all Arabs, said the paper. Instead, the Arab oil countries are paying to the Americans, the French and the British who are not only occupying part of their land but also imposing sanctions against the Iraqi people, said the paper. It said that reports now speak of Arab oil states planning to finance the cost of American-led plots to topple President Saddam Hussein in total disregard of the Arab national principles and the feelings of millions of Iraqi people and in service of the colonial forces. The paper said that these oil-rich Arab states are harming the very existence of the Arab order and opening the door wide for more crimes to be committed against the Arab Nation.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily questioned the wisdom of holding in Moscow the multilateral negotiations to discuss issues related to water, disarmament and other matters at a time when Israel is making it impossible for everyone to live in peace. Tareq Masarweh questions the role of Europeans, Asians and other countries in the Moscow discussions when they first and foremost concern the people of the Middle East and when they realise that the Arabs and the Israelis have not yet achieved one single step towards peace and security in their region. The writer said that the Washington talks achieved nothing for the Arabs but perpetuated Israel's intransigence and its occupation of Arab land. The Americans and the Israelis have suggested the Moscow meeting as a way to escape the pressing issue of withdrawing Israeli forces from occupied Arab land and to divert world public attention from the Israeli intransigent position. He said that only when the bilateral talks in Washington have achieved a headway and some progress can the different parties contemplate holding a multinational conference to discuss issues considered secondary to the peace and stability based on an end to Israel's occupation of Arab land.

By John Law

EVER since President Bush first announced on Sept. 23 that he would support repeal of the U.N.'s "Zionism is racism" resolution, one of the best kept secrets in the American media has been the answers to these questions: if Zionism is a form of racism, just what makes it so? If Zionism is not a form of racism, why isn't it?

There was, in fact, virtually no such debate in the mainstream media during the entire period from Mr. Bush's announcement of support to the eventual repeal of the resolution on Dec. 16. It's not that the issue did not receive voluminous coverage; after Mr. Bush's September announcement, both the New York Times and the Washington Post had six-column banner headlines and news stories of 1,500 words or more, while other newspapers and magazines gave the story similar treatment. But one looked in vain for stories that included the "pros and cons" of the issue. Instead, the main mes-

sage to readers — as well as to television viewers — was that those who wanted to annul the resolution believed it was "obscene" and wrong, and the other side believed that it wasn't. The analysis seemed to reach no higher level than that of a pair of arguing toddlers who say to each other: "Why?" "Because." "Because why?" "Because."

It didn't get much better after the repeal. The Washington Post might well have broken its own record for concentrated diatribe, when in a single, short, leading editorial it called the resolution "a vicious and false invention," "anti-Semitic," "egregious," "indefensible," "harmful," "offensive," and, for good measure, "propaganda trash." The Post and the rest of the major media continued to avoid mention of the merits — or the lack thereof — of the arguments against Zionism. Instead, they used their space to discuss the international political developments that led to the repeal. For example, the New York Times averred that "the vote reflected the changing interna-

tional currents of recent years, the Gulf war in particular, which split the Arab and Islamic worlds, and the changes in the former Soviet bloc, fostered by the collapse of communism." The Post said that the resolution had "its roots in the cold war and Third World animosity towards the United States and its ally, Israel." So much for the rights or wrongs of Zionism.

Many publications, like the Christian Science Monitor, took the lead from President Bush (who had said that "to equate Zionism with the intolerable sin of racism is to reject Israel itself") and criticised the resolution on the same grounds — as though the resolution were a serious threat to Israel's very existence. Yet the Zionism resolution had not called for Israel to be ejected from the United Nations. Nor could it have posed a serious challenge to Israel's "right to exist" in any practical sense, since the Arab countries had already recognised this right in a number of ways — particularly through their acceptance of U.N. resolutions 242 and 338. Furthermore, by 1975 the

PLO leadership had already given implicit recognition to Israel's "right to exist" within its 1967 borders (and made it official in 1988). Syrian spokesmen, too, during the recent Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington, reiterated that Syria had accepted the right of all countries in the region to live within secure and internationally recognised borders.

None of these red herrings, however, can alter the fact that Zionism is "a form of racial discrimination." It is a political creed that was founded a century ago on the idea that the Jews of the world should have their own state. So far, so good. But unlike other national movements, it then turned out that the state that they wanted would not be carved out of an area where large numbers of their national movement were actually living — such as parts of Eastern Europe — but in an area where there were only a tiny number of Jews living in a small Ottoman province, Palestine, in which more than 90 per cent of the population were Muslim and Christian Arabs. The

rationale given for choosing Palestine was that large numbers of Jews used to live there, 2,000 years earlier. Furthermore, it would be a state dedicated to the "ingathering" of as many as possible of the world's Jews — but only Jews.

Thus, in the Israel of today, as has been true ever since its establishment in 1948, only a Jew may immigrate and become a citizen. In fact, upon entry he becomes one automatically, but law, as long as it can show he is Jewish. There are some non-Jewish residents who are acknowledged, although grudgingly, to be Israeli "citizens": the Palestinian Arabs who were born there and never left. But they are actually second-class citizens, having fewer rights within the law than Jews do. All citizens must carry identification cards that designate their "nationality." If they are not a Jewish nationality, they are officially deprived of many benefits, including their right to receive a proportionate share of the public funds required to maintain their villages and schools and to provide for child welfare. They can-

not work on a farm that has been leased by Jews. They cannot prevent confiscation of Palestinian lands for the purpose of settling new Jewish immigrants, such as in the recent take-over of nearly 2,000 acres of Palestinian land adjacent to Upper Nazareth, or the threatened eviction of Palestinians from the village of Ramiyah for the same purpose. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

Perhaps one of the frankest explanations of the status of the Arab citizens of Israel came from Shmuel Toledano — who served as "advisor on Arab affairs" to several Israeli prime ministers — when he told author David Shipper that Arab Israelis could never be given equality with Jewish Israelis: "Equality means an Arab can be in the cabinet. Equality means that an Arab can be in the Foreign Office. Equality means that he'll be in the security services and everything. Can he? The answer is, he can't. And if he can't, he's not equal."

And if he's not equal because he's an Arab, Israel is guilty of racism — Middle East International.

U.S. borrowing money for Israel — annual interest alone exceeds \$3 billion

By Frank Collins

Frank Collins is a free-lance journalist specialising in the Middle East. The article is reprinted from The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs.

THE double dip recession has now become so grave that the American people are demanding that President George Bush direct his attention to the sorry state of the domestic economy. Foreign aid, notoriously unpopular with the U.S. public in recent years, has become doubly so in this period of economic distress. Even if Congress fails to react to the disquiet about foreign aid, it is likely that the bloated U.S. grants to Israel in particular will no longer be exempt from public scrutiny and that they will be looked upon as a bad congressional choice between responding to domestic fiscal needs and yielding to AIPAC, the Israeli lobby.

Part of the taxpayers' resentment against the practices of the federal government has been sparked by the manner in which Congress appropriates money, particularly foreign aid. Foreign aid generally is allocated through

"continuing resolutions," without "yes" or "no" vote on particulars. Key committee members then allocate 40 per cent of the worldwide total of U.S. bilateral foreign aid to Israel and Egypt.

Aid to Egypt climbed to roughly two-thirds of that to Israel as a result of the U.S.-brokered peace agreement between the two countries.

Grants for foreign aid are espe-

cially noteworthy because they amount to giving away borrowed money. The case of Israel over the last 40 years is the most astonishing. Every dollar given to Israel has been money borrowed by the U.S. Treasury from private lenders, domestic and foreign. As the Treasury debts are interest-bearing, the Treasury has had to borrow more money year by year to pay the interest on the outstanding debts incurred by the

grants to Israel, plus interest on the earlier interest.

By the end of the fiscal year (FY) 1990, such U.S. borrowings, starting with a modest grant to Israel of \$100,000 in 1951, totalled \$32.111 billion for the grants themselves, and an additional \$21.351 billion in accumulated interest, for a total of \$53,565 billion.

In FY 1991, annual interest

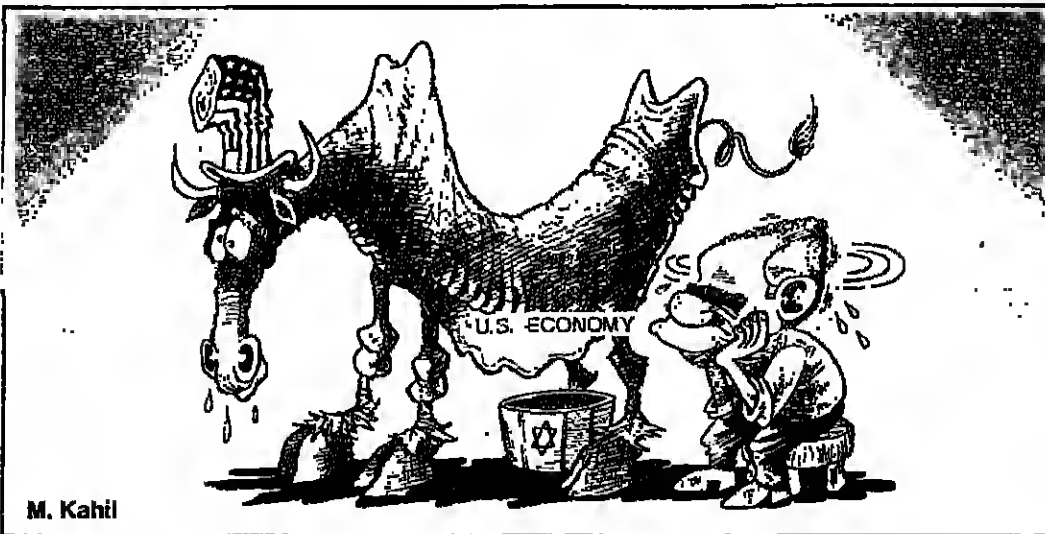
alone on that \$53,565 billion cost \$3.2 billion at the average Treasury rate of 5.45 per cent. Thus the grants made to Israel for FY 1991, officially reported as \$5,256 billion, actually cost U.S. taxpayers \$8,502 billion in FY 1991, when the \$3,246 billion in interest is included.

This lopsided situation will continue in FY 1992, when \$3,491 billion in interest will be added to the cost of the FY 1992 grant of \$3 billion, which already has been paid to Israel in the first month of the fiscal year. This FY 1992 outlay, general details of which are summarised in the table below, does not include any part of the \$10 billion in U.S. loan guarantees requested by Israel, consid-

eration of which was deferred for 120 days at the request of President Bush last September.

If the deficit financing of subsidies to Israel were to continue for 10 more years and at five per cent interest, the total debt undertaken by the United States would be \$155 billion and the annual interest payment after 10 years would be \$10.7 billion, more than three times the annual grant of \$3 billion. This is an annual total of almost \$14 billion, or more than \$3,000 per year per Israeli. With this prospect, it is clear that borrowing ever-increasing amounts of money to give to Israel on an annual basis for the indefinite future will be unacceptable to the American public.

Fiscal year	Grant for given year (million)	Average Treasury Interest Rate (%)	Annual Interest Payment (million)	Cumulative Grants to Israel (million)	Cumulative Grants + Interest (million)
1951	0.1	1.83	0.0	0.1	0.1
1961	18.3	2.30	63.8	345.3	2,856.4
1971	2.8	3.64	136.7	437.6	3,893.6
1981	1,291.0	6.91	1,024.9	8,280.2	17,148.5
1990	3,028.0	5.75	3,074.1	32,111.4	59,565.4
1991	5,256.0	5.45	3,246.3	37,367.4	68,067.7
1992	3,000 (+7)	5.13 (est.)	3,491.9	42,623.4	74,739.1
2001	3,000 (+7)	5.0 (?)	7,233.5	67,367.9	154,902.0



M. Kahlil

Kuwait finds new ways to harass its Palestinians

By Jean Gueyres

KUWAIT CITY — The "Palestinian neighbourhoods" of Nagra, Hawalli and Farwaniyah are Palestinian in name only today. Thirty to 60 per cent of the homes here were once occupied by Palestinians. Now, ten months after the liberation of the emirate, they are no more than a tiny minority. Their stores and business establishments are still standing, but they have changed hands. The streets have lost their old bustle and sparkle.

Only two or three Palestinian families live in a building that once housed a score of them. The accommodation is being gradually filled by Sri Lankans, Filipinos and Thais who are beginning to lend a very Asian flavour to these districts. The Palestinians whom I met seemed to be still bitter but they were resigned to their plight.

One young Palestinian from the area told me: "In three months we'll all be gone. What ever happens now, the point of no return has been reached and we won't be able to live here any longer. For us, it's hell."

Some 400,000 Palestinians used to live in the emirate before the Iraqi occupation. They are now no more than 50,000, and 20,000 of them hold Egyptian passes, able to the West for exerting pressure were very limited. The Dutch ambassador representing the European Community was more categorical. "If necessary," he assured me, "we'll be very firm."

As a sop to ease the West's troubled conscience, the Kuwaiti government gave the Palestinians time until Jan. 1, 1992 to have their situation clarified. That period has now been extended to May 31, but arbitrary expulsions are taking place without any publicity. Intercepted and screened at roadblocks which are going up increasingly, people classified as belonging to "opposing nationalities" have their security cards (entitling them to a temporary stay in the country) stamped: "Must leave the emirate within

seven days," before and during the last Gulf Cooperation Council summit, security checks were widened to the point of upsetting which are documents accepted nowhere else. They will probably be the last Palestinians in the country who have nevertheless made a substantial contribution to Kuwait's economic growth.

"That's a precisely the reason why we hold such a grudge against them; they let us down badly," explained a Kuwaiti official who made no secret that his government's present policy was to get rid of not only the Palestinians, but also all the nationals of countries listed as being "against" Kuwait — the Sudanese, Yemenis, Jordanians and Iraqis.

Since last July, the violent setting of scores has been replaced by less blatant methods of carrying out purges, above all by methods less likely to shock "the West" — the Westerners who liberated Kuwait. "Noted one Palestinian: 'The liberators have disappointed us.' Between March and May last year he and his friends went round to Western embassies to urge them to do something to end Kuwait's anti-Palestinian measures."

"Rest assured, you won't be bothered any more," the American ambassador told us, he recalled bitterly. "The British ambassador was more pessimistic. He admitted that the means available to Kuwait to escape this 'police climate,' a good many Kuwaitis and residents decided to take a two-week holiday. Several government departments and businesses had to shut down because they were short-staffed."

Some members of the parliamentary opposition say the security operation, which lasted almost a fortnight was above all an "exercise to test the effectiveness of the military and police system of repression that has been gradually introduced to cope with any eventuality and for preparing public opinion to accept such a situation which is

going to be repeated frequently." The exercise would appear to have been particularly successful since it led to rounding up, on the authorities' own admission, more than 600 "suspects" who have been herded into school buildings pending expulsion. Other reliable sources put the number arrested at more than 3,000.

Since Kuwait's liberation, the reigning Sabah dynasty have recovered much of the prestige it lost as a result of its rather inglorious behaviour when the emirate was invaded. At the same time it has also recovered its old arrogance and become "the most extremist element in Kuwaiti society," says Ahmed Roubel, an academic who was a member of the parliament dissolved in 1986.

The new government headed by Sheikh Sa'ad has broken off relations completely with parliamentary opposition and has even ended the dialogue with the intellectuals by keeping on press censorship. It seems to be intent on setting up a political party made up of the Sabah family members. Mr. Roubel, who is a leading figure in the Democratic Forum and represents the left in the political community, maintains a measure of independence with respect to the rest of the opposition. "While the public has no confidence in the government, it is not satisfied with the opposition either," he admitted.

The opposition has all its weaknesses, acknowledged Abdallah Nibari, general secretary of the Democratic Forum which recently again defied the authorities by becoming a political party, something that is practically forbidden. "The seven groups forming the opposition front are in full agreement on general objectives, but there is no consensus on how to go about attaining them," he said. "Thus some of us are not very inclined to make use of the popular forces. We in particular do not agree with some aspects of our religious brothers' programme. But what constitutes our strength is that, all our differ-

ences notwithstanding, there is no rivalry among us. On the contrary we're all anxious to pull together. This worries the government and is prompting it to try to split us."

With a view to bolstering cooperation, the Democratic Forum has just put out several ideas which it thinks the seven groups (they recently elected a management committee) could use as a "common platform" in the elections promised for October by the government.

"The emirate to the Sabahs and power to the people" is a slogan which in Forum's view encapsulates the spirit and the letter of the 1962 constitution, and all the opponents are agreed on that Article 4 of this fundamental text in fact makes Kuwait "a constitutional and hereditary emirate maintained in the line of the Sabahs" and Article 6 asserts that it is a democratic state, its sovereignty issuing from the "nation."

Abdel Aziz Al Sagr, all-powerful chairman of the Kuwaiti Chamber of Commerce, who represents the big merchant class, takes a more qualified view of this point. But he agrees with the other political opponents on the basics, that is that "the Sabahs' power cannot encroach on the principles of (political) life or call the people's interest into question."

The opposition is united on these general principles and is counting on the coming elections to try to win back the influence it had before parliament was dissolved.

All those I talked to thought that with the United States leaning on Kuwait the elections would indeed take place — even if opponents considered the date fixed to be too far away — but they felt the Sabah family would do everything it could to make sure the elections took place in an anti-democratic climate and under conditions least favourable for the opposition.

So long as press censorship

remains, the possibilities of expression will be very restricted. Similarly, so long as the authorities maintain the decision to bring back the National Kuwaiti Council, a sort of rump parliament set up just two months before the Iraqi invasion which opened up a wide gulf between the Sabahs and the opposition, the election campaign is not going to be fought on a level field. The government is going all out to puff up the reputation of this body whose least activity is given extensive coverage in the official press. The recently granted 25 per cent increase in wages, say the authorities, was "made at the National Council's recommendation."

As a matter of fact, the increase — which in any case will be very quickly cancelled out by inflation — is aimed primarily at making the public forget the real "present" that the authorities are preparing to give the banks by

taking over, on conditions particularly advantageous for the banks and their debtors; their bad debts amounting to \$26 billion arising from the 1982 Souq Al Manakh (an unofficial exchange) crash. Among the 2,500 debtors, who after a three-year period of grace are expected to repay the government over a period of 20 years, are many prominent Kuwaitis close to the Sabah family. Three hundred of them owe the banks 80 per cent of the \$26 billion.

There is no doubt that this new scandal, which is already beginning to touch off sharp controversies in the emirate, will provide the opposition with one of its prime arguments in the election campaign for denouncing some of the government's more questionable practices and lending weight to the idea that only a genuinely free and representative parliament could prevent the excesses of an absolute power — Le Monde.

LETTERS

Western compassion

To the Editor:

Some Arab cynics allege that the West has no conscience and that it is guided by its interests only. However, this allegation is partially refuted by the fact that Italy has decided to release about \$1 million of Iraqi assets, frozen there since the Gulf crisis, to be used for the purchase of food and medicine for Iraq.

If we realise that this generous act involves ten per cent of the said assets and that the released sum amounts to about five and a half cents for each Iraqi — the price of two tablets of aspirin — we should be able to appreciate this humane Italian step.

George Khoury,
Amman, Jordan.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Shamir presses his defiance

(Continued from page 1)

called the government's economic failures.

The defections have robbed Mr. Shamir of his slender majority in parliament.

"The fact is that until today no one can say that in the past years there was a government stronger than this government for preserving the land of Israel," Mr. Shamir said.

"In parallel, there was not a government like this, which achieved a peace process, is carrying it on and will continue to," he added.

Israel entered the U.S.-sponsored peace talks at a conference in Madrid last October, followed by three rounds of bilateral Israeli-Arab talks in Washington.

Labour Party leader Shimon Peres called for a suspension of negotiations while an election campaign was underway.

"I don't believe you can conduct a peace process when elections are in the air because the parties will not really negotiate, they will try to gain favour with their own audience. It will be show business," he told Israel Radio.

Another senior Labour party official, Michal Harish, who on Sunday was elected for a new term as party secretary, said Labour was submitting a no-confidence motion against Mr. Shamir's cabinet over unemployment.

Mr. Harish indicated Labour would continue to stress the unemployment issue and it seems likely Labour will attempt to divert attention away from the peace process, where Mr. Shamir could be seen as successful, and call attention to the government's failures.

"We have prepared a programme on unemployment which we think is the main issue and over which we are going to a vote of no-confidence," Mr. Harish said.

Likud sources said they would resist any no-confidence vote aimed at toppling the government and would try to reach an agreement with Labour for early elections.

Mandatory elections are scheduled for next November.

Mr. Shamir's previous government was dissolved by a no-confidence vote in 1990 and a repeat performance could harm Likud in new elections.

Palestinians still find Israeli practices racist

By Pascal B. Karny

THE resolution passed by the U.N. General Assembly in Dec. 16, 1991, repealing Resolution 3379 of Nov. 10, 1975, equating Zionism with racism does not change the inherent character and ideology of Zionism, especially from standpoint of Palestinians who are its victims.

No doubt the intense U.S. lobbying and its immense pressure on the majority of the United Nations member states, the disarray and divisiveness in the Arab World, political expediency and self-interest were among the factors which led to the passing of the repealing resolution.

For how, otherwise, could one explain the change in voting by those states, which had previously voted in favour of the 1975 resolution, at a time when Israel practices and oppression against Palestinians are increasing and not diminishing.

The racist policy is the hallmark of Zionism since its inception. Israel, the brainchild of

Zionism, is still applying in Israel and in the occupied territories discriminatory laws and regulations as testified by United Nations human rights bodies. Resolution 2443 of Dec. 19, 1968 and other subsequent resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly have called upon Israel to respect and implement human rights in the occupied territories.

But Israel turned a deaf ear to all United Nations calls and refused, as is still refusing, to receive the special committee charged with investigating Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the population of the occupied territories.

One should read the book of Dr. Israel Shahak titled "Le Racism de l'Etat d'Israel" (The racism of the State of Israel) so as to be enlightened about the racism of the State of Israel. Dr. Shahak is a well-known professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In his book, the author gives a convincing, detailed account about the racial discrimination practised by Israel against its Arab

citizens let alone the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Dr. Shahak recounts, for example, how hundreds of Arab villages in Israel were completely destroyed — houses, garden walls and even cemeteries and tombstones — so that literally not a stone would remain standing and visitors would be told that it was all desert.

Palestinians were dispossessed and expelled from their homes in 1948, even after the establishment of the state of Israel, so as to replace them with Jews coming from all over the world.

This racist policy is in effect the practical implementation of Zionist ideology and planning as envisioned by Theodor Herzl, the father of Zionism. Herzl wrote in his "diaries" that something would have to be done with the Palestinian natives and suggested the following: "We shall have to spirit the penniless population across the borders by securing employment for it in the transit countries while denying it any employment in our country, both

the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discreetly and circumspectly."

We should also recall what the Zionist Haim Weizman, the first head of state of Israel, had frankly stated: "We want Palestine to be Jewish as England is English." In other words, in order to achieve Weizman's aim, non-Jews should be kicked out of Palestine.

There are now in Israel Jewish leaders (some members of Shamir's cabinet) imbued with the Zionist ideology and who are calling for the transfer of Palestinians to Jordan and other Arab countries. Moreover, Israel does not allow Palestinians to return to their homes in the occupied territories or Israel proper while, under the law of return, any Jew outside Israel can come and live there and is immediately and automatically granted Israeli citizenship. Arab lands are being confiscated and given to Jewish settlers not only in Israel proper but also in the occupied territories

in which confiscation is a *fortiori* prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 regarding the protection of civilians in time of war.

In his book "The Question of Palestine," Professor Edward Said of Columbia University, New York, writes the following: "Zionism never spoke of itself unambiguously as a Jewish liberation movement, but rather as a Jewish movement for colonial settlement in the Orient. Zionism has appeared to be uncompromisingly exclusionary, discriminatory, colonial praxis."

Dr. Shahak, in his capacity as chairman of the Israel Human and Civil Rights League, stated in a commentary dated Nov. 18, 1983, that: "The numerous experts who assert (especially in the U.S.) that Israel is a democracy, with the 'rule of law' even for its citizens, are not only lying, but are racists as well. Israel democracy is strictly for Jews. All non-Jews citizens of Israel live under the Defence Regulations 1945 Code, which was truly de-

scribed when it was applied by the British to the Jews, as 'worse than the Nazi laws.' From 1951, those truly Nazi-like laws are applied only to the Palestinian citizens of Israel. It should be added to Dr. Shahak's commentary that those same laws to which he refers, plus the harsh military orders are being applied to the Palestinians of the occupied territories too.

It can thus be concluded that Zionism can be equated to racism notwithstanding the repealing of the 1991 resolution. Unless and until the state of Israel treats the Palestinians fairly and justly, in accordance with the general principles of law recognised by civilised nations and humanitarian norms, and until it recognises their national rights, including their right to self-determination, Zionism will carry with it the stain of racism.

The writer was a lawyer in Palestine up to the end of the British Mandate in 1948 and subsequently a legal advisor in UNRWA headquarters in Beirut and Vienna.

Algeria announces arrests

(Continued from page 1)

day concerned attacks by Islamic radicals last November on army and gendarmerie posts in eastern Algeria that left 30 people dead, police sources said.

The announcement appeared timed as a warning to fundamentalists following a machine-gun and bomb attack Sunday in Algiers that killed one soldier and wounded two policemen.

No claim of responsibility was made. Police blamed the attack on "armed elements," but did not refer to the fundamentalists.

But the November attacks in the border town of Guemmar have been specifically blamed on Muslim radicals with uncertain links to the FIS. They were led by an Algerian who fought in Afghanistan.

The power vacuum created by Mr. Benjedid's forced resignation has been filled by a five-man high state council presided by Mohammed Boudiaf, a hero of Algeria's war for independence from France.

The council has announced that its mandate will run to the end of Mr. Benjedid's scheduled term in December 1993.

The council strongman is clearly Defence Minister Khaled Ne-

zar. The military opposed Mr. Benjedid's intention to share power with a FIS-controlled parliament.

FIS leaders expect their party to be banned under a 1989 law forbidding political groups with religious character.

Mr. Hachani who has urged his followers to refrain from violence to avoid provoking the army, compared himself Sunday to a man holding the pin on a live grenade.

"I'm holding a live grenade in my hand. I'm trying to do everything so that it doesn't explode," he said.

"If this junta goes too far, it will be impossible for us to keep the people under control," he said. "The situation will no longer be dominated by us or anyone."

Algerian authorities have pledged to maintain order, and tanks remain posted around critical government buildings and police patrolled the streets of Algiers.

An FIS statement said some members of the party's executive committee were arrested Sunday. Also arrested were some party members elected to parliament, including deputies from the towns of Kouba and Larba.

Top Libyan leader in China

(Continued from page 1)

Libya has refused to extradite the suspects, saying they could not get a fair trial in the West. It invited Western judges to come to Libya for the trials, but the offer was rejected.

The United States, Britain and France, all permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, have been lobbying other mem-

bers of the world body to come out against Libya. But so far no formal action has been taken to impose sanctions.

China, also one of the five permanent Security Council members, has been silent on the issue. As a permanent member of the council, it could veto any U.N. sanctions against Libya.

Lebanese hostage crisis stalled

(Continued from page 1)

which a U.S. navy diver was killed.

Abbas, who holds a German passport, was jailed for 13 years in April 1988 for his part in kidnapping two German businessmen in Beirut in an

attempt to win his brother's release.

Sbeikha Toufaily said, without elaborating, that a U.N.-sponsored plan to trade all prisoners had been aborted late last year by the United States and Israel.

Turning Gulf war victory into political stability — no easy task

By Walter Putnam
The Associated Press

NICOSIA, Cyprus — Looking back, winning the Gulf war was the easy part.

Turning the U.S.-led allied victory into durable political and economic gains to stabilise the Middle East is proving to be more difficult.

Saddam Hussein's army may have been defeated in the war that started a year ago, but the Iraqi President remains in power in Baghdad, fending off Kurdish separatists in the north and rebellious Shiite Muslims in the south.

The Americans want to topple him, but don't seem to know how without plunging Iraq into civil war, which in all likelihood would dismember the country.

Iraq was the strongest Arab power and the greatest threat to Israel before it invaded Kuwait, but it now is a social and economic basket case, devastated by allied air raids and U.N. economic sanctions.

In the aftermath of the war, the United States brokered Arab-Israeli peace talks, but those negotiations have bogged down after sessions in Madrid and Washington.

And President Saddam struck a responsive chord among many Arabs last year by noting that the United States was quick to enforce U.N. resolutions calling for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, but had done nothing about resolutions calling for Israel's withdrawal from captured Arab land.

"Clearly, the United States was stung by the charge of double standards," said Philip Robins, a Middle East analyst with London's Royal Institute for International Affairs. "That made it difficult for Washington to dodge that question. After all, the Gulf crisis was about international legitimacy."

"If the war for Kuwait proves anything, it is that no one — Arab, European, American or Israeli — can afford to leave the Middle East as it was," said Charles Snow, who writes on Middle East affairs.



Saddam Hussein

Writing in the Middle East Economic Survey, an oil industry newsletter, Mr. Snow observed: "The next time regional instability precipitates a conflict... it could lead to a catastrophe of truly global proportions."

The crisis caused by President Saddam's invasion of another Arab state divided the Arab World and may finally have shattered the concept of pan-Arab unity from the Gulf to the Mediterranean.

It left Jordan, Yemen and the Palestinians out in the cold for supporting President Saddam, and accelerated a process of political realignment in the region, triggered by the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union.

Most notably, Syria, once Moscow's main ally in the region, moved firmly into the U.S. orbit. In return for backing the anti-Saddam coalition, Syria was given the green light to end the civil war in neighbouring Lebanon in October 1990.

Those events, coupled with once radical Iran's need to restore links with the West or face economic collapse, helped secure the release of American and British hostages held by pro-Iranian Shiite Muslims in Lebanon.

"The war demonstrated the awesome potential of American military power and demonstrated that it is the only real world power," Mr. Robins said.

Consequently, many in the region now are looking to Washington for direction and security. But some countries are "really rather frightened by the United States" because it has the super-power monopoly," Mr. Robins said.

Foremost among them is Libya, which now faces possible economic sanctions — or worse — after U.S., British and French authorities linked it to two airliner bombings in which more than 400 people perished.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other conservative Arab states now are dependent on the West, the United States in particular, for their security.

But Iran, for all President Hashemi Rafsanjani's bridge-building efforts with the West, remains deeply suspicious of U.S. intentions.

Iran, which made political gains by staying neutral during the war, is the Gulf's most populous nation, with 50 million people, and has the potential to be the region's strongest military power.

The Gulf's oil and gas may be a key factor binding the West to the Saudis and their allies, but analysts question how long Americans will support the autocratic regimes of the Gulf kings and emirs.

The monarchs have promised limited democratic reforms, but they are proceeding at a glacial pace.

"The desire for more participatory policies is strong in the region," noted analyst Shireen T. Hunter of Georgetown's Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

"Without participatory policies, Middle Eastern political institutions would never mature. And without mature, popularly based political institutions, the Middle East would never be stable," she said.

Moussa Sabri — journalist and politician

By Adel Darwish

MOUSSA Sabri's 47 years in journalism epitomised a vivid chapter in Egypt's modern political history, a time when a handful of Egyptian journalists helped change the political course of their nation.

All of these men joined the press in the 1940s during Egypt's golden age of liberal multi-party parliamentary politics. As their careers developed, the press was affected by Col. Gamal Abdul Nasser's 1952 army coup that ended King Farouk. By the time President Nasser established his one-party dictatorship a decade later most of them had become editors of largely state-controlled national papers. Some played the role required of them in bringing to an end an era of free press. Some lost their posts, while a few survived to revive this free press at the end of their careers.

Mr. Sabri was sacked in 1968 from the prestigious post of editor of the largest circulation Arabic language daily, the Cairo Al Akhbar, for attributing Nasser's defeat in the 1967 war to "corruption in the government." He took refuge in Al Gounghoriyah, a sister daily with a smaller circulation and of less interest in Nasser. Two years later he was reinstated at Al Akhbar by the new president, Anwar Al Sadat, a friend of his since the World War II.

Moussa Sabri was born in 1924, the son of a court clerk in the Coptic-Christian dominated county of Assiut, in Upper Egypt. He became a law graduate in 1943, and was imprisoned in the same year by the British-run political police for "subversive activity in war-time." In jail he met First Lieutenant Sadat.

Following his release in 1944, Mr. Sabri deserted the law for journalism. But it was not until 1971 that he contributed to the second major change in Egypt's post-war history by introducing a new term into the nation's political



Moussa Sabri

al dictionary. He baptised Sadat's coup, which removed Nasser's powerful placement, the "Revolution of correction."

Mr. Sabri played a crucial role in changing public opinion in Egypt in the 1970s, by penning editorials in praise of a pluralist political system. He wrote speeches for President Sadat, who was at first made fun of by his own people, still under the spell of the populist Nasser and his fiery speeches. Mr. Sabri structured the president's public addresses in a way that fully exploited Sadat's performing talents. The style he chose for Sadat won the president popularity and each speech came an event both amusing and full of surprise.

An Egyptian Copt himself, Mr. Sabri's editorials in the mid 1970s attracted wide sympathy among readers eager to reassess their Egyptian Pharaonic Nilotic heritage, at a time when the majority wanted to shake off many false notions of Arabhood forced upon them by President Nasser's own regional ambitions.

Mr. Sabri's editorials rarely treated foreign affairs, but they helped persuade many influential

figures from the left-wing intelligentsia and the liberal establishment to line up behind the president in implementing his new reforms. By 1976, the multi-party system which Nasser had abolished 20 years earlier had been restored, and Egypt broke away from mainstream Arab politics that had taken her into three costly wars.

Many argue that work by editors like Moussa Sabri helped restore the confidence of the Egyptians by uncovering their real Egyptianism. Such confidence gave Sadat the needed strength to make his historic trip to Jerusalem in 1977 and the subsequent signing of the peace treaty with Israel in 1979. Under Mr. Sabri's editorship, Al Akhbar helped keep national morale high, thus enabling the nation to shrug off an onslaught from Arab states, that turned from a battle of words to a full-scale economic war, the most harmful aspect of which was the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Egyptian workers from their well-paid jobs in Libya, Iraq and the Gulf states and the confiscation of their assets. Moussa Sabri lived to see history repeat itself as thousands of Egyptians were expelled penniless from Kuwait and Iraq in 1990. Although fighting his last battle with cancer he managed to write a few columns of "I told you so" as the majority of Arabs who had rejected the peace drive of the 1970s came round to the rehabilitation of Sadat. Few in the Middle East would deny Mr. Sabri's role in preparing the land for Sadat to sow the seeds of peace. Mr. Sabri's legacy includes 25 books: novels, short stories, and a history of his country's press.

Mr. Moussa Sabri, journalist, born 1924, died on Jan. 8, 1992. The article is reprinted from The Independent.

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Financial Markets

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U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	NEW YORK Close Date: 17/1/1992	TOKYO Close Date: 20/1/1992
Sterling Pound	1.7960	1.8005
Deutsche Mark	1.5120	1.5663
Swiss Franc	1.3265	1.4005
French Franc	5.4310	5.4180
Japanese Yen	124.45	123.95
European Currency Unit	1.2835	1.2845

USD Per STD
European Opening: 8:00 a.m. GMT

Barometer Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.06	4.06	4.12	4.37
Sterling Pound	10.65	10.50	10.57	10.25
Deutsche Mark	9.37	9.37	9.25	9.12
Swiss Franc	7.05	7.05	7.05	7.51
French Franc	9.08	9.08	9.55	9.43
Japanese Yen	5.57	5.18	4.90	4.87
European Currency Unit	10.12	10.13	10.00	9.87

Interest rate for amounts exceeding 1 U.S. Dollars, 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Precious Metals	1 STD-Oz	10 Gram	1 STD-Oz	10 Gram
Gold	355.25	0.60	Silver	4.28
				0.090

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6760	0.6760
Sterling Pound	1.2172	1.2233
Deutsche Mark	0.4757	0.4776
Swiss Franc	0.4820	0.4844
French Franc	0.1246	0.1254
Japanese Yen	0.5456	0.5483
Dutch Guilder	0.3760	0.3799
Swedish Krona	0.1159	0.1175
Italian Lira	0.0565	0.0568
Belgian Franc	0.02034	0.02044

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7640	1.7720
Lebanese Lira	0.0768	0.0775
Saudi Riyal	0.1799	0.1810
Kuwaiti Dinar	—	—
Qatari Riyal	0.1631	0.1644
Egyptian Pound	0.5000	0.5100
Omani Riyal	1.7300	1.7410
UAE Dirham	0.1831	0.1844
Greek Drachma	0.3630	0.3740
Cypriot Pound	1.4900	0.5140

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Markets

Index	18/1/1992 Close	19/1/1992 Close
All-Share	133.92	133.92
Banking Sector	110.10	110.07
Insurance Sector	132.09	132.01
Industry Sector	168.77	168.90
Services Sector	152.04	151.51

December 31, 1991 - 1992

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Monday.

One Sterling	1.7985/95	U.S. dollars
One U.S. dollar	1.1489/94	Canadian dollar
	1.5860/70	Deutschemarks
	1.7880/90	Dutch guilders
	1.4040/50	Swiss francs
	32.68/70	Belgian francs
	5.4100/50	French francs
	1195/1196	Italian lire
	123.75/85	Japanese yen
	5.7790/7840	Swedish crowns
	6.2375/2425	Norwegian crowns
	6.1550/1600	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	356.15/356.65	U.S. dollars

Foreign investment in Mexico last year exceeds \$9 billion

MEXICO CITY (R) — Foreigners invested \$9.2 billion in Mexico last year, largely from the sale of Telefonos de Mexico, but the flow will slow in 1992, a commerce ministry official said.

"It (1991) was a very atypical year," Fernando Sanchez, the ministry's subsecretary for foreign investment, told Reuters in an interview. "We don't think that we will do as well this year. We will be satisfied if we can reach a level of, say, \$5 billion to \$6 billion."

Privatisation of phone giant Telmex accounted for between \$2.5 billion to \$2.7 billion of foreign investment last year.

Since President Carlos Salinas de Gortari took office in December 1988 about \$16.5 billion has come into the country, Mr. Sanchez said.

He said the sale this year of the remaining banks, some insurance companies and a railroad equipment maker would not bring in the amounts of foreign money that privatisations generated in 1991.

In 1990, Mexico attracted \$4.6 billion from abroad, of which about \$1 billion went into the stock market.

Of the \$9.2 billion that entered the country in 1991, about half flowed into the stock exchange, Mr. Sanchez said.

Plant stops ink supplies to print roubles for lack of roubles to pay for ink

MOSCOW (AP) — Belarus imposed a second round of price increases Monday, and shoppers frustrated after nearly three weeks of high costs and empty store shelves blocked streets in a central Russia city.

Food wasn't the only thing in short supply. In the central Russian region of Kuzbass, a plant that produces special ink for the printing of roubles has stopped shipping to Moscow because the government hasn't sent enough roubles to pay for the ink.

Mikhail Belyaev, a Moscow-based spokesman for the Central Bank of Russia, said Monday the action would not seriously hinder the printing of roubles and said Russia could get ink elsewhere.

A leading daily newspaper reported that Muscovites must spend 1,844 roubles — twice the average monthly salary — to ensure "a bare minimum of subsistence."

Belarus on Jan. 3 had followed Russia's lead and raised prices on most foodstuffs but had kept prices low on milk, other dairy products and bread until Monday.

It raised the price of milk to nearly one rouble — still below the price in neighboring republics — and sent new bread prices between 1.5 roubles and seven roubles. The increases reflected a doubling or tripling of the price.

Russia on Jan. 2 became the first member of the new Commonwealth of Independent States to make the painful move toward a market economy with a mixture of free prices and higher state-regulated costs.

So far, there has been little price-related violence. Last Thursday, however, police in the

Uzbek capital, Tashkent, fired on students protesting higher prices. At least two students were killed.

One former republic, Azerbaijan, already has decided to roll back the price of bread after consumer complaints.

Azerbaijani President Ayaz Mutalibov announced Saturday that break prices would be cut 30 per cent on Feb. 1, but the lost revenues will be offset by higher prices for vodka, wine, cotton and other commodities in high demand.

Some shoppers have been outraged by prices of two roubles or more for bread, a staple long kept at artificially low prices, usually well below even one rouble a loaf.

Turkmenistan's president, Saparmurad Niyazov, Sunday issued a decree barring price rises above wage increases, the Russian Information Agency said.

The decree affects basic consumer goods, including dairy products, bread, fish, non-alcoholic beverages and children's goods.

In the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok, about 200 demonstrators waved signs outside a city council meeting Monday to protest price increases, the TASS news agency reported.

"We support the market, but not killer prices," one sign read. "We want bread, not queues," read another.

In central Russia, shoppers took matters into their own hands Sunday, blocking highways and city streets in Perm, Russian television reported. They were angry about higher prices for sausage and other meats, as well as the absence of other foodstuffs.

"People are exhausted, standing in long lines waiting for their living conditions to improve," the television said.

Jordan Times Tel: 667171

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — Thin but widespread selling from institutions and futures-linked programmes sliced prices while investors sat on the sidelines. The Nikkei closed down 407.55 points or 1.91 per cent at 20,913.82, its lowest close since October 1990.

HONG KONG — Share prices surged across the board on follow-through buying. The Hang Seng Index rose 55.58 points to a new closing high of 4,510.47.

PARIS — French CAC-40 index finished 5.90 points or 0.32 per cent higher at 1,865.85 in a quiet session apart from intense bid activity swirling around bottled water group Sotco Perrier.

LONDON — The FTSE index closed 8.2 points up at 2,544.9, buoyed by stronger pharmaceutical stocks and futures-linked buying.

NEW YORK — Wall Street stocks traded lower at midday in a pullback from Friday's record high close. Activity was light due to the Martin Luther King holiday. The Dow was down about seven points at 3,258.

IMF sees Syrian economic improvement as temporary

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — The recent improvement in Syria's economy is temporary and will not continue without fundamental policy reforms, says a confidential International Monetary Fund (IMF) report cited Monday by the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES).

The bright spot is a sizable increase in Syrian oil production over the past two years, with 1991 petroleum revenues up nearly 50 per cent over 1989, the IMF report said.

MEES said in a separate report that Syria's oil production is nearing 500,000 barrels a day. Most of the oil comes from north east Syria close to the Iraqi and Turkish borders.

The economic survey, an oil industry newsletter published in Nicosia, said the IMF report was written after the fund's latest annual consultations with Syrian officials last July.

Syria has been moving to open up its economy, heavily burdened by decades of state management on the Soviet model and heavy military spending aimed at achieving "strategic parity" with Israel.

Damascus moved to that direction under the impact of Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika and declining economic aid from the Soviets. The trend was accelerated by Damascus' decision to

side with the U.S.-backed coalition that drove Iraq out of Kuwait.

The balance of payments surplus of \$1.15 billion that Syria predicted for 1991 is due entirely to aid Damascus received from Saudi Arabia and its allies as payment for joining the anti-Saddam Hussein coalition, the IMF report noted.

The IMF experts said Syria's state-dominated economy has made limited moves toward a more market-based system.

MEES said that while the IMF recognised the significance of Syria's liberalisation moves, "the fund almost invariably believes that further and much more far-reaching reforms are required if the Syrian economy is to experience substantial and long-term improvement."

However, analysts have stressed that significant economic liberalisation is unlikely to occur until political reforms are brought in as well.

And most consider it unlikely that the Syrian regime, dominated by the minority Alawite Muslim sect, can afford to loosen its iron grip on the nation without weakening its own position.

Still, among positive moves, the IMF cited a reduction of subsidies on agricultural inputs such as fertilizer and pesticides,

cuts in subsidies on food and a decision to allow private distribution and sale of the five basic subsidized foodstuffs: Bread, sugar, rice, tea and vegetable oil.

But the cost of these subsidies is grossly understated in Syria's official accounts, the report said.

It noted that the budget allocation for the body which administers subsidies is only 900 million Syrian pounds (\$80 million at the official exchange rate) — less than the cost of the subsidy on wheat alone.

Among positive moves, the report pointed to a May 1991 investment law allowing repatriation of profits and capital by foreign companies, a five-year tax holiday for certain projects and waivers of import restrictions and duties.

It also said a cut in the top tax rate from 92 per cent down to 60 per cent, introduced at the beginning of this year, should encourage private sector activity.

Figures for private-sector exports showed a dramatic increase in 1989. But these were distorted because many of the exports were sold to the former Soviet Union at inflated prices under an agreement aimed at reducing Syria's estimated \$15 billion debt to Moscow.

The breakup of the Soviet Union and drastic economic reforms

introduced in Russia and other republics this year are likely to reduce this source of income to a trickle.

Predictions by Syria's central bank that Syria will show balance-of-payments surpluses in 1992 and 1993 are over-optimistic, the IMF report said.

On oil, MEES said light crude output from the Al Furat Petroleum Co. (FPC) concessions at Dair Al Zur and Ash Sham in the northeast was 332,600 barrels a day in early January, up 10.46 per cent from a year before.

The newsletter said it was understood that FPC expects that output to rise to about 360,000 barrels a day by the end of 1992.

Syrian sources more optimistically put the year-end target at 400,000 barrels a day, MEES said.

FPC is 50 per cent owned by the state-run Syrian Petroleum Co. (SPC), the rest by subsidiaries of U.S. Shell, Royal Dutch/Shell and Germany's Deminor.

Another 150,000 barrels of day of heavy crude is pumped from SPC's Suwaidiyah-Karachuk fields and 10,000 barrels a day of light crude from Elf-Aquitaine's North Atula field.

That put total Syrian output at 492,000 barrels a day, MEES reported.

Currency dealers expect dollar to test record 120.45 yen low

TOKYO (R) — Tokyo foreign exchange dealers said Monday they expected the dollar to soon challenge its record low of 120.45 yen, set on Jan. 4, 1988.

"Every incentive suggests the dollar will dip below 120 yen," a Mitsubishi trust and banking dealer said.

"All support lines have been broken. Unless the monetary authorities say they would prefer not to see the dollar going below 120 yen, it is only a matter of time (before it breaks the record low)," he said.

An international monetary source in New York who declined to be identified told Reuters Friday that the Bank of Japan (BOJ) had joined the Federal Reserve (Fed) in selling dollars versus yen.

In the intervention, reported by dealers, the central banks sold dollars at 127.15 yen.

At Tokyo midday (0300 GMT), the dollar had weakened to 123.95 yen and 1,5890 marks from New York's 124.40/50 and 1,5915/25 close on Friday. It ended in Tokyo at 127.95 and 1,625 on Friday.

"We received the message from the central banks very clearly that they want a higher yen," said Yoshinori Shinagawa, chief dealer at Hokkaido Takushoku Bank in Tokyo.

"The market took the intervention as the signal that the central banks want the dollar to stay somewhere between 120 to 125 yen."

Some dealers pointed out that the Fed played the major role in the intervention.

"If the BOJ had acted alone in Tokyo, the market probably would have ignored the intervention, but it has the Fed who sold the dollar, showing that the U.S. does not mind its currency saying weaker against the yen," said a Tokyo trust bank dealer.

Although many Tokyo dealers expect some rebound, they said the dollar has little room to recover, with some Japanese exporters a little behind their schedules in dollar sales.

"The key is exporters," said the Mitsubishi trust dealer. "If they rush into the market (with dollar sales), we might see the dollar plunging much faster and further than the market expects."

Even if the exporters are not involved in panic-selling of dollars, they are expected to step in the market on their rally.

"Because there is fear of another intervention to sell the dollar if it rises sharply against the yen, some Tokyo dealers said it would be safe to go short on the dollar at above 125 yen for now."

"At least until the G-7 meeting, the dollar is going to stay bearish and try the record low eventually," Mr. Shinagawa of Hokkaido Takushoku said.

Group of Seven nations (G-7) — Japan, the United States, Germany, Britain, Canada, Italy and France — are due to meet in New York on Jan. 25. Some Japanese newspapers and dealers speculate they will issue a joint communiqué stating the G-7 nations want a higher yen.

But not every dealer is bearish on the dollar, with some worrying that the Japanese and U.S. central banks may intervene with dollar-buying operations at below 120 yen.

"If the dollar keeps sliding down, long-term investors certainly will liquidate their investment in bonds and other assets in the U.S., and I don't think Washington will be happy to see that," said a currency dealer at a major Japanese insurance firm.

A further appreciation of the yen will not help Japanese exporters and may force the BOJ or finance ministry to take counter-measures, some dealers said.

Arabic For Speakers Of Other Languages

The Language Centre at the University of Jordan announces that the intensive course in Modern Standard Arabic for speakers of other languages will commence on February 1, and will last for 16 weeks.

The programme is intensive and classes meet in the morning for 20 hours per week, Saturday-Wednesday. Evening classes meet three days a week: Saturday, Monday and Wednesday.

Those interested please call at the Language Centre for registration.

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Bird On A Wire
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.
and Friday at 11:30 a.m.
Special shows for children on Thursday

Ninja Turtles

Cinema Tel: 625155
RAINBOW
PARADISE MOTEL
Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Troops take over in Congo

BRAZZAVILLE, Congo (AP) — The army high command Monday demanded the resignation of Prime Minister Andre Milongo and seized the state radio and television stations as well as the international airport.

It was not clear whether Mr. Milongo, the interim civilian leader, would heed the order. The command demanded a new civilian government to lead this central African nation to democracy.

Interior Minister Alexis Gabou indicated Mr. Milongo would resist, saying in a statement that "the government remains the government." Mr. Gabou said he expected a statement from Mr. Milongo soon.

A broadcast by the military said Mr. Milongo had fled his home with his family and gone into hiding despite assurances of his safety.

"The high command does not know where Mr. Milongo and his family are, and declines all responsibility for what may happen to them," the statement said.

Soldiers surrounded Mr. Milongo's offices Monday.

The takeover of key government facilities occurred Sunday night, less than a week after mutinous soldiers briefly took over the broadcast centre and surrounded the military headquarters to protest Mr. Milongo's firing of senior officers.

Those soldiers, attached to the elite Parachute Regiment and supported by members of outgoing Col. Denis Sassou Nguesso's Presidential Guard, also demanded a new military leadership be appointed within 10 days.

Mr. Gabou said the Parachute Regiment was also loyal to Col. Nguesso.

Mr. Milongo was chosen interim leader in June by a national conference on democracy that stripped power from Col. Nguesso, a colonel who was elected in 1979 and made Congo a Marxist-Leninist state.

Mr. Milongo's government was charged with organising free elections before June.

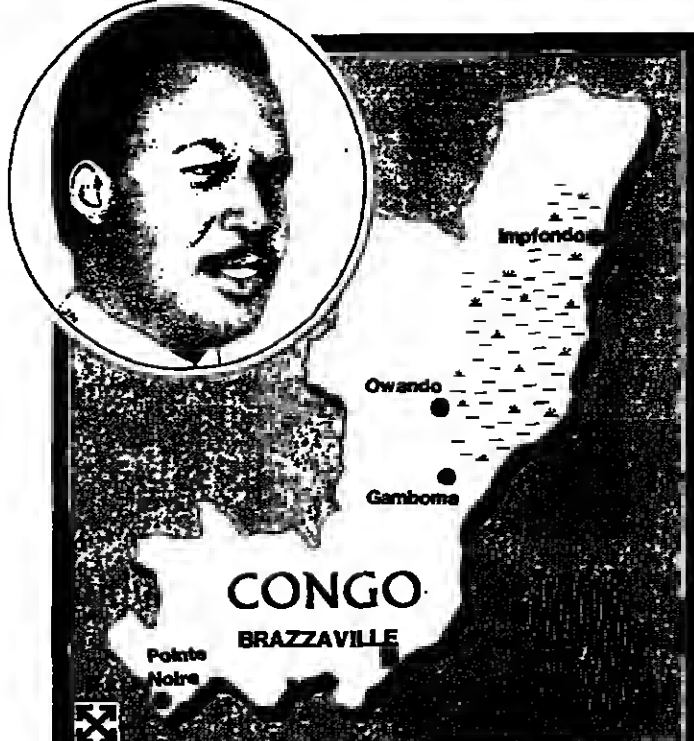
Last week, Mr. Milongo fired several top officers and appointed new men in what he said was an attempt to break up a tribal monopoly of the military command.

He refused to obey last week's threat by mutinous soldiers and continued to rule until Sunday night, when troops prevented him from flying to Pointe Noire, Congo's economic capital, to inaugurate a new oil well for the American company Amoco.

Mr. Milongo also refused military demands for pay owed them since November and for improved allowances. He replied by saying the government was broke.

The government has been late paying all its employees.

One Monday, Col. Guy Mabiala of the Motorised Infantry Battalion, read a statement saying Mr. Milongo's government was "incapable and incompetent."



It urged the Superior Council, the interim legislative body, to name a new prime minister quickly, saying: "The army has no intention of overturning the democratic process in which Congo is engaged."

It also announced a 7 p.m.-to-6 a.m. curfew.

Major vows to hunt Irish bombers

BELFAST (R) — British Prime Minister John Major toured Northern Ireland Monday vowing that IRA guerrillas who killed seven Protestants with a bomb last week would be "hunted and hunted and hunted for the rest of their days."

Mr. Major flew to Belfast Monday for a first-hand look at a deepening security crisis after the IRA killed the construction workers with a massive roadside bomb.

Mr. Major's surprise visit was made as Britain sent 600 extra troops to the province and the Irish Republican Army (IRA), fighting to end British rule there, said they would keep on killing "crown forces collaborators."

The seven men were blown to pieces near Cookstown in County Tyrone Friday night in the worst civilian attack in Northern Ireland since the IRA killed 11 people at a war memorial ceremony in Enniskillen in November 1987.

The dead, and seven injured when the bomb blew up their van, had been repairing a British army base.

Protestant unionists called for tighter security and the introduction of internment of suspects without trial.

The weekend dispatch of 600 more soldiers brought the number of British troops in Northern Ireland to 17,500, many of them deployed in the area where the bomb went off. Security chiefs fear Protestant extremists may launch bloody reprisals.

Friday's bombing was the worst in seven years of IRA attacks against firms supplying British forces. The 26 killed in this campaign range from a fruit and vegetable supplier to a timber merchant. Others included cement workers and a man who supplied frozen potato chips to a police canteen.

In Dublin Sunday, the IRA vowed to attack all who supply materials to British troops and police in Northern Ireland.

"For our part, we in the IRA will not allow a situation where military personnel are freed from essential services and maintenance and then deployed where they can carry out wholesale repression of the community," a statement said.

Mr. Major, himself the target last February of an IRA mortar attack that narrowly missed 10 Downing Street, planned to return to London later Monday to meet four Protestant politicians from Northern Ireland.

Fiery preacher-politician Ian Paisley, a member of the British parliament, said he and the others would demand the resignation of Britain's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Peter Brooke.

Protestants were enraged Friday when Mr. Brooke appeared on a Dublin television that showed singing a folk song just as troops in Northern Ireland were pulling bodies from the shattered van.

"I'll be putting to him that I doubt the secretary of state now has any credibility," Mr. Paisley told the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Hurd, Yeltsin discuss aid, nuclear weapons

MOSCOW (Agencies) — British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd met Russian President Boris Yeltsin Monday for talks on Western aid, the fate of the vast Soviet nuclear arsenal and the future of the fragile new Commonwealth.

Mr. Hurd, who arrived in Moscow in the early hours of Monday morning after brief visits to Ukraine and Kazakhstan, went into the meeting with Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev.

A British official said Mr. Hurd and Mr. Kozyrev talked about relations between the 11 former Soviet republics in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), particularly tensions between the two most powerful — Russia and Ukraine.

The official said Mr. Kozyrev told Mr. Hurd that a Russia-Ukraine working group had been set up to thrash out differences over dividing Soviet forces and troops based in the Ukraine and to resolve a dispute over the Black Sea Fleet.

"Things must calm down, the official quoted Mr. Kozyrev as telling Mr. Hurd. "Ukraine needs to approach things with realism."

Mr. Hurd, after his talks with Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk in Kiev Sunday, urged all the republics to resolve their differences through peaceful dialogue and offered the European Community as a model for the Commonwealth.

Mr. Kravchuk, however, told reporters that Ukraine reserved the right to consider quitting the Commonwealth if it disagreed with its policies and direction.

"If we object to something then we absolutely have to raise the question of leaving the Commonwealth of Independent States," the president said.

Mr. Hurd, who was scheduled to meet Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, Mr. Yeltsin's economic advisor, and Defence Minister Marshal Yevgeny Shaposhnikov later Monday, also briefed Mr. Kozyrev on this week's Washington conference on coordinating Western assistance to the Commonwealth.

The foreign secretary, who will fly to Washington Tuesday from London, said Britain strongly supported Russia's application to join the International Monetary Fund and said the time was fast approaching when world financial institutions needed to be fully involved.

Speaking in Kiev Sunday, Mr. Hurd said IMF membership was an "essential accompaniment of effective Western aid to the reforms being carried out."

Mr. Hurd also briefed Mr. Kozyrev on the Jan. 31 U.N. Security Council summit in New York called to discuss the Commonwealth and the future direction of the United Nations. Mr. Yeltsin will be attending that meeting and was scheduled to fly to London for talks with British Prime Minister John Major on his way to New York.

Meanwhile, in a move that could worsen tensions in the southern states of Armenia and Azerbaijan, leaders in Nagorno-Karabakh declared their disputed territory an independent state in the Commonwealth Saturday, Interfax reported.

The predominantly Armenian territory lying within Azerbaijan has claimed more than 800 lives since 1988. Its status has prevented Armenia and Azerbaijan from settling their age-old rivalry and has destabilised the entire region.

Another separatist movement was trying to gain exposure on the Crimean peninsula on the Black Sea, in southern Ukraine. The Russian Information Agency said that an estimated 3,000 nationalists rallied in the port city of Sevastopol demanding independence for the Crimea's mostly ethnic Russian residents and Russian control of the fleet.

Former Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev handed control over the Crimea to Ukraine in 1950s as a gift to the Ukrainian people.

"Attempts are being made to divide us on ethnic grounds, but it is unity (of the military) that will make us happy," headline activist Sergei Baburin told the rally, the Russian Information Agency reported.

Gamsakhurdia's chances of regaining power look slimmer

ZUGDIDI, Georgia (R) — Hundreds of people gathered every day in the small west Georgian town of Zugdidi to noisily demand the reinstatement of Zviad Gamsakhurdia, ousted as president earlier this month by an armed revolt.

The crowd, made up mainly of middle-aged women and young men, chant "Zviad, Zviad" and wave posters of Mr. Gamsakhurdia, who returned to his home base in the west of the republic last week in a bid to regain power.

But despite the protests and similar demonstrations in the capital Tbilisi, Mr. Gamsakhurdia's chances of success are fading.

The people who overwhelmingly swept him to power in presidential elections last May seem to be losing their enthusiasm for his firebrand nationalist policies.

Forces loyal to the Military

Council in power in Tbilisi are gradually taking over the Megrelian region, Mr. Gamsakhurdia's home base, meeting little or no resistance along the way.

In the town of Samtredia, Gamsakhurdia supporters even called the government forces to tell when they would be pulling out.

Correspondents driving at the weekend along the main road through Megrelia, which Mr. Gamsakhurdia wants to use as the base of a western Georgian state, failed to spot a single poster or placard supporting him.

There is little evidence his backers have the large range of modern weapons wielded by the government forces.

Government troops massing in the central city of Kutaisi are armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles and grenade launchers and on Sunday evening began moving field artillery pieces into the region.

lence in their communities.

"I think we have to be alarmed by the rapidly deteriorating situation here at home," Corretta Scott King declared in a speech on the civil rights movement her husband led on the eve of the U.S. holiday celebrating his birth.

Mrs. King, speaking from the pulpit of Ebenezer Baptist Church that Rev. King co-pastored before his 1968 assassination, said America "must now do a better job of providing economic security for our own citizens," if it hopes to be credible as leader in a world where human rights are advancing.

"The future of our civil rights is much in doubt" with the retirements of liberal supreme court justices replaced by conservatives named by President George Bush, she said.

Mr. Bush in 1988 won only 12 per cent of the vote among black Americans, who make up one-eighth of the nation. Republican strategists have worked to boost their support among the opposition Democrats' most solid constituency.

Mr. Bush visited Rev. King's tomb here Friday for a wreath-laying ceremony and a speech lauding the slain preacher's non-violent campaign against racism in what analysts called a bid to shore up his standing with blacks.

Without violating his pledge to stay neutral in the presidential race, Mrs. King told the packed church it was "imperative" for blacks to "increase our voting power."

India set to embrace American military

NEW DELHI (R) — Long mistrustful of the United States, India now appears ready to forge close military ties with Washington following the collapse of its old Soviet ally, officials and defence analysts say.

The emerging defence cooperation reflects warming political and economic ties with Washington, as cash-strapped India looks to the West for aid and investment and casts about for new strategic relationships, they said.

Lieutenant-General Johnny Corns, army chief of the U.S. Pacific Command, arrives in New Delhi Wednesday to chair the first ever Indo-American Army Committee that will look at possible joint exercises, training programmes and transfer of technology.

Admiral Frank Kelso, chief of U.S. Naval Operations, will be one of the main guests at India's Republic Day parade Sunday.

Adm. Kelso will probably discuss joint naval exercise with his Indian counterparts, and the implications of the U.S. pullout from its huge naval base in the Philippines at Subic Bay, diplomat said.

India has the biggest navy among the littoral countries of the Indian Ocean, and its army of 1.1 million troops is the world's fourth biggest.

The Soviet Union had been India's main arms supplier, diplomatic ally and key trading partner. But the Soviet collapse has thrown a once-cosy relationship into turmoil.

"India wants to move faster than the U.S.," said one diplomat. "The perception of India is changing, but it's not like the U.S. is jumping into bed with these folks."

He said the United States wants closer links with India's military to better understand its strategic goals in South Asia, a seething cauldron of ethnic conflict and local rebellions, where the Islamic World meets Hindu India and Communist China.

Defence analysts said India and the United States share a common apprehension about Muslim fundamentalism and a possible Islamic bloc stretching from Turkey to Pakistan and embracing the new Central Asian republic in the old Soviet Union.

India has ancient links with the republics, which lie along the old silk caravan route, and was ruled for several centuries by Muslims who invaded from Central Asia.

Meanwhile, the once-strong relationship between India's arch foe Pakistan and the United States is under great strain with Washington believing Pakistan possesses the "Islamic bomb."

Washington has chopped aid to Pakistan as a result.

Both India and Pakistan are believed to be threshold nuclear powers and Delhi is under pressure to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which it says discriminates in favour of existing nuclear powers.

Defence analysts and diplomats say Washington hopes to use the carrot of increased military cooperation and future defence equipment sales to soften the stick it is wielding to persuade India to sign the treaty.

Cambodia fighting forces 10,000 from their homes

KOMPONG THOM, Cambodia (AP) — Heavy fighting in this northern Cambodian province has driven thousands of people from their homes this month and appears the most serious breach of the October peace accord.

Cambodian Red Cross officials said Monday that they have registered 9,700 people displaced by the fighting in Kompong Thom since Jan. 5 and that dozens have been wounded.

More than 100 tonnes of rice and other emergency aid arrived in the province Monday from the national capital, Phnom Penh.

"Every day now we admit people from gunshots and shelling. I couldn't even count how many this month," said a nurse at Kompong Thom hospital, who requested anonymity.

Wounded civilians at the hospital said Khmer Rouge guerrillas were shelling villages in Kompong Svay and Stoeung districts, less than 30 kilometres from the provincial capital.

At the hospital, reporters saw at least six people who had been wounded by what they said were Khmer Rouge artillery attacks on their village in Kompong Svay Sunday.

Earlier this month, Khmer Rouge President Khieu Samphan accused government forces of attacking Khmer Rouge positions at Stoeung and other areas in the north and west of the country.

Light sentences given in Berlin Wall trial

BERLIN (AP) — Two former east German border guards were convicted Monday in the shooting death of the last person killed trying to flee the Stalinist state over the Berlin Wall.

Only one was sentenced to prison, however, and the other two co-defendants were acquitted.

The 4½ months trial was widely considered a test case for investigators trying to build charges against dozens of other former east Germans for deaths at the wall.

More than 200 people were killed trying to flee east Germany. This was the first prosecution stemming from those deaths.

Defence lawyers in the politically charged case insisted that the defendants were following the legitimate orders of a then-sovereign country when Chris Gueffroy, 20, was killed by a bullet through the heart on Feb. 5, 1989.

Just nine months later, anti-Communist protesters breached the wall.

In announcing the verdict Theodor Seidel, chief judge of the Berlin Regional Court, drew parallels between the blind obedience to orders in the Nazi era and in Communist east Germany.

Defence attorneys had repeatedly challenged the court's authority to hear the case and many Germans criticised the proceedings as unfairly singling out four young guards when former east German leader Erich Honecker and other top-ranking Communists remain free.

In what may have been an attempt to lessen criticism, the prosecution asked for suspended sentences.

Ingo Heinrich, 27, was convicted of manslaughter and received a 3½ year sentence. Andreas Kuchnast, 27, received a two-year suspended sentence for attempted manslaughter. Acquitted by the court of three

He said the heavy fighting was endangering the peace accord, and urged the quick deployment of the full U.N. peacekeeping force mandated by the accord. Only a small advance U.N. contingent has arrived in Cambodia.

The Khmer Rouge is the largest guerrilla group fighting the government that Vietnam installed after invading Cambodia in late 1970. The invasion toppled a fanatical Communist Khmer Rouge regime that had slaughtered hundreds of thousands of people in execution chambers and slave labour camps.

The upsurge in fighting could complicate U.N. plans to send home the 370,000 Cambodian refugees living in Thailand. U.N. officials say repatriation will not start until the country is safe from fighting, land mines and other dangers.

U.N. refugee officials say their preparations for the repatriation will be complete by the end of February, and that it could design the following month if conditions allow.

The plan of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees is to group the refugees into four staging areas in the Thai camps, then transport them by land to reception centres inside Cambodia. From there, they would go back to their villages. They will receive U.N. food and supplies.

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Judges and two jurors were Mike Schmidt and Peter Schmitt, also former border guards. The four defendants, charged with manslaughter, had faced maximum sentences of life in prison.

Judge Seidel, in pronouncing sentence before the tense courtroom, said, "there is no doubt that the deadly shot came from Heinrich."

He said Mr. Gueffroy and a companion had simply wanted to escape the Communist regime to seek better opportunities in the West.

The judge's reference to Nazi Germany angered defence attorney Hubert Dreyling, who was representing Mr. Kuchnast.

"Comparing the German Democratic Republic to the Nazi era is improper," Mr. Dreyling told reporters.

As Judge Seidel announced the manslaughter conviction and sentence, Mr. Heinrich sat in the dock looking dismayed and angry. Afterward, refused to talk to reporters. Mr. Heinrich will remain free pending further legal moves in the case.

Karin Gueffroy, the victim's mother, sat at the front of the old, dark courtroom looking strained. After the verdict was announced, she stood alone, refusing to comment.

The defendants said during the trial that they regretted the death but had no other choice.

"At that time, I was following the laws and commands of the German Democratic Republic," said Mr. Heinrich, 26, in his final plea.

"What was right then can't be wrong now," Defence Attorney Rolf Bossi told the court.

The verdict comes when two other former border guards are on trial in another Berlin courtroom and justice officials seek to put Mr. Honecker on trial for issuing shoot-to-kill orders to border guards.

S. Korean premier signs nuclear pact

SEOUL (R) — South Korean Prime Minister Chung Won-Saik signed a pact with North Korea Monday banning nuclear weapons from the divided Korean peninsula, a government spokesman said.

Mr. Chung put his signature to a document signed by North Korean Premier Yon Hyong-Muk earlier this month.

Settling the nuclear question frees the two Koreas to put into practice a historic non-aggression and reconciliation pact signed on Dec. 13.

U.S. President George Bush, on a visit to Seoul earlier this month, described North Korea's alleged development of nuclear weapons as the greatest threat to peace in North East Asia.

The North has agreed to sign a nuclear safeguards accord by the end of this month to permit international inspection of its nuclear facilities.

The two Koreas will exchange copies of the nuclear pact Tuesday at the border village of Panmunjom.

Both the nuclear and non-aggression pacts will go into effect when the two premiers meet for a sixth round of North-South talks in Pyongyang from Feb. 19 to 21.

The nuclear agreement binds the two states, still formally at war 39 years after the three-year Korean War ended, to establish a joint nuclear control committee within a month of the treaty going into effect.

MANCHESTER, New Hampshire (R) — The five major candidates for the Democratic nomination clashed over tax relief but generally agreed on ways to fight crime and improve education in an election campaign televised debate.

Several sojourned at Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton as they tried to bolster their campaigns and spark voter interest in the 1992 presidential campaign with four weeks left to the Feb. 18 New Hampshire primary.

A poll published Sunday showed the 45-year-old Clinton leading the Democratic pack. Tiny New Hampshire, whose 1.1 million residents make up only half of one per cent of the U.S. population, is a crucial testing ground because it holds the first primary, in which party voters express preferences for candidates.

Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa and former California Governor Jerry Brown attacked Mr. Clinton on his plan for a middle-class tax cut to stimulate the recession-hit U.S. economy.

Debating were Mr. Brown, Mr. Clinton, Sen. Harkin, Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey and former Massachusetts Senator Paul Tsongas, who denounced tax-cut proposals in general.

The candidates agreed on strong anti-crime measures but said economic and social problems must be addressed as well. They also were in concert generally on more assistance for edu-

U.S. Democratic candidates jab at Clinton

gion and attacked President George Bush as not being aggressive or living up to his pledge of being "the education president."

Sen. Harkin delivered the strongest attack on Mr. Clinton's record as governor of Arkansas, a poor southern state, for 11 years.

He said Arkansas was next to last in getting children ready to attend school, last in environmental policy and last in workplace safety. "And yet he gave tax breaks to large corporations and very wealthy people," Sen. Harkin said.

"That's Reaganomics — and it's wrong," said Sen. Harkin, referring to former President Ronald Reagan's economic policies.

Mr. Brown, who disrupted an earlier debate by shouting out his toll-free fundraising phone number in violation of debate rules, once again grabbed the spotlight with his call for the government to replace the tax code with a flat tax of no more than 13 or 14 per cent.

"That sounds like something proposed by believers in the flat-earth society," said Sen. Harkin, who then turned on Mr. Clinton.

Referring to Mr. Clinton's plan to raise sales taxes on food, utilities and used cars in his state, he asked: "If that's what he's doing in Arkansas, what's he going to do as president stick it to the little guy again?"

Mr. Clinton responded by saying: "I'm very interested that Senator Harkin doesn't want to

give middle class people a \$400 tax break but he thinks it's fine to give himself a \$23,000 pay raise," a reference to Mr. Harkin's voted for a pay raise for the U.S. Senate.

A poll of New Hampshire Democratic voters published by the Boston Globe found 79 per cent undecided, showing that voters have been slow to focus on the campaign.

But voters asked to pick from a list of candidates gave Mr. Clinton 29 per cent, followed by Mr. Tsongas — whose home state borders New Hampshire — with 17 per cent. Sen. Kerrey was third with 16 per cent. Mr. Brown with seven per cent and Sen. Harkin with three per cent. Twenty-eight per cent expressed no preference.

The primary balloting is for delegates to the Democratic National Convention in July in New York City, where the party will select its nominee to face the Republican candidate in the Nov. 3 general election.

On the Republican side, President George Bush, who only a few months ago was expected to glide to an easy re-election victory without serious opposition for the Republican nomination, now faces a tough challenge in New Hampshire from right-wing political commentator Pat Buchanan.

The widow of Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday used her late husband's old pulpit to urge American blacks to increase their political power in the 1992 election and curb drug-related vio-

COLUMN

'Fergie' flies back to royal row over Texan oilman

LONDON (R) — Britain's Duchess of York flies home Monday to a royal row over her friendship with a wealthy Texan oilman.

metals palace." Society dinner-table talk in London at the weekend focused on unpublished photographs of the 32-year-old duchess, known as Fergie, in poolside holiday poses with Texan Steve Wynn. The photos, which the Daily Mail newspaper said showed her in a swimsuit, were taken in 1990 on a Mediterranean holiday while her naval officer husband Prince Andrew was at sea. A cleaner found holiday snaps in Wyatt's vacated London flat and showed them to the Mail before handing them to police. Their discovery set tongues wagging amongst royal watchers, columnists and aristocratic circles. Newspapers reported concern at Buckingham Palace. Gossip ranged over the state of the Yorks' five-year marriage, which has produced two daughters, and the behaviour and friendships of Britain's younger royals. The duchess, Queen Elizabeth's daughter-in-law, who returns home from a three-day visit to Florida, was quoted in weekend newspapers as denying any impropriety took place with Wyatt. Buckingham Palace kept its usual dignified silence on the private lives of the royal family except to say that the photographs had been returned to the duchess.

Roses, cognac left on Poe's grave

BALTIMORE (AP) — Like a specter from one of Edgar Allan Poe's short stories, a mysterious man dressed in black left a half-bottle of cognac and three roses on the writer's grave, maintaining a tribute that has marked Poe's birthday for 43 years. The visitor showed up before dawn at Westminster Hall, a former church in whose cemetery Poe is buried, said Jeff Jerome, curator of the Edgar Allan Poe House and Museum. Mr. Jerome and five others kept a vigil Sunday morning, and watched the man's silent graveside commemoration, but made no effort to intercept or question him. The significance of the items left at the grave remain unknown, mainly because no one wants to intrude during the private tribute, but Mr. Jerome offered a partial theory. "The three roses are for the three people buried underneath the Poe monument: Poe; his wife, Virginia; and his aunt Marie Poe Clemm, who was the mother of Virginia," he said. "The cognac is a mystery. We've looked through all of Poe's stories. We've done our best to read his biographies to find out if he was fond of cognac, and we can't find any connection."

The gifts were first left in 1949, the 100th anniversary year of Poe's death. Sunday was the 183rd anniversary of his birth.

Catcalls put police on alert

BOYNTON BEACH, Florida (AP) — It was one howler of a whodunit, and even Ms. Marple was stumped. Police rushed to find out why 911 was being repeated dialled without anyone speaking on the other end. Turned out it was a series of catcalls. After repeated calls last Sunday night in which the caller hung up without saying a word, police went to Ms. Marple's house. The 23-year-old supermarket employee denied making the calls, but the police insisted on checking inside. In a bedroom, Ms. Marple and the police found her calico cat, named Kitten, with one paw on the cordless phone. Kitten didn't simply press a speed-dial button. She pounced 9-1-1 in sequence the first time. Then she hit the redial button. Ms. Marple has since given Kitten an old phone to play with.

Naples mafia in stolen car ring

ROME (R) — The Naples mafia helped run a thriving business in stolen cars broken up by Italian police investigators said. Magistrates said they had so far found 2,000 stolen cars registered with false papers in provinces all over Italy, busting a ring based in Rome and worth several billion lire (million dollars). Some 20 members of the Rome underworld had joined forces with the camorra, the Naples version of the Sicilian mafia, to steal and sell the cars to unwitting buyers, investigators said. There were no details on whether any had been arrested.